

SOME

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THOUGHTS

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CONCERNING

RELIGION,

NATURAL and REVEALED.

WITH

A LETTER to a Bishop,

CONCERNING

Some Important Discoveries in PHILOSOPHY and THEOLOGY.

CAREFULLY CORRECTED.

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THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

CONSTITUTION

OF THE

PARLIAMENT

OF GREAT BRITAIN

AND IRELAND



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SOME
THOUGHTS
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IT is impossible to view the immensity, the variety, the harmony, and the beauty of the Universe, without concluding it to be the workmanship of a Being infinitely powerful, wise, and good.

It is impossible to examine the structure of the most inconsiderable plant or animal, without being surpris'd with such admirable contrivance, as pronounces the author infinitely intelligent, and excludes all suspicion that it ow'd its origin to blind chance.

The vegetable world is adjusted with such amazing skill, that each plant, perfect in its own kind, is supported, and propagated, mechanically, by the unerring action of the sun, the air, and the earth where it grows: its seeds, by that mechanism, produce new plants of the same kind; and the herb, that perishes with the season, clothes the fields with the same livery against the next. That brute matter, inert, and insensible, should be framed so as to perform such wonders, shews wisdom, and power, far beyond the comprehension of the most perfect man.

The action of the material powers in this system upon the organized body of a plant, preserves, and propagates

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it: its roots shoot out into the soil where it grows; there it finds abundant aliment for perfecting its trunk, and preparing its seeds; and those seeds are dropped where they meet the like encouragement. But it is not so with animals: the most perfect of the kind, left to the direction of material and mechanical powers only, must perish without rearing any succession.

Vegetables and animals are so far similar, that both require constant supplies of fresh juices; but in this they differ, that nature mechanically reaches to the one the supply it wants, whereas the other must, by some act of its own, find, and fetch it: and therefore, in animals, besides matter and mechanism, there is an active principle; somewhat, of which we have no conception or knowledge but by its effects, that finds, prepares, and takes in proper nourishment, and determines to the propagation and preservation of its own species.

By what sort of mechanism this principle acts on, or is affected by, the meer matter to which it is join'd, we cannot at all conceive; but this we see, that it calls all the brute animal creation to those acts that are necessary for self-preservation, and propagating the species: each class of animals is highly industrious to compass these ends; and, if we may judge by what we feel transacting in the brute part of ourselves, there is in them a strong desire to do those acts that are necessary for the support of themselves, and a very sensible pleasure attending the gratification of that desire.

It does not appear to us that plants are sensible of pleasure or pain, whereas animals, we know, are affected by both. To a plant it is indifferent whether it is supported or not; but to an animal it is not so: it tastes felicity in receiving the necessary supplies, and languishes under want; the pleasure it receives in feeding, is the motive to look for food, and it is bribed to support itself by the happiness it meets with in taking in its nourishment. What the plant does necessarily, the animal does from choice, and is highly rewarded, by the pleasure it receives, for every act of its duty in preserving itself, and propagating.

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Who can give attention to this oeconomy, and at the same time reflect on the profuse supply that nature every where affords, for the support of the infinite numbers of animals, of different kinds, that swarm upon this globe, without concluding, that overflowing goodness and benevolence is an attribute of the infinitely wise, and powerful, Author of Nature?

In looking over the whole animal creation, one sees infinite variety of instincts, and talents, some approaching nearer, some more remote from, those dispositions that are to be met with in man, but all tending to the preservation of the creature possess'd of them; but it does not appear to us, that the sagacity, or discerning, of the Brute goes any further than to its own immediate preservation, and promoting what its instinct leads it to: in this consists the brute's felicity; it seems to be the measure of its understanding, from which it never swerves.

When man turns his eyes inwards, upon himself, he sees in himself the brute in great perfection; similar calls to preserve life, and to propagate the species, and similar gratifications for obeying those calls: but then he feels somewhat in himself more noble; somewhat that distinguishes him from all the rest of the animal creation, that falls within his knowledge: he is conscious of reflection; he can complicate ideas, and compare them together; he can discover the relations of things; he can perceive the beauty, the order, the harmony of the creation; he can, in the creatures, see the power, the wisdom, and the goodness of the Creator; he finds in himself an insatiable thirst after somewhat that has no connection with the body, after knowledge; a strong desire to contemplate, a disposition to admire, and to imitate perfection; a natural propensity to gratitude, and thankfulness for favours; and, when he carries his thoughts to the fountain of all wisdom, power, and goodness, the Author of the creation, a fulness of heart that breaks out in gladness and adoration.

When man considers that he alone, of all the animal creation, has got eyes to see the beauty and excellency of the Universe; that he alone has got an understanding to

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discover the perfection of the Creator in his works; that he alone has got a soul fitted to admire, to adore, and to rejoice in the goodness and perfection of his Maker; talents unnecessary for preserving his life, or propagating the species, but talents that qualify him for enjoying a much more permanent and exalted kind of felicity than the other animals seem capable of relishing: Can he doubt that those eyes, this understanding, and that disposition of mind, was given him to fit him for seeing, admiring, and adoring the fountain of all goodness and being? can he question that the doing so is indispensably his duty, as it would be his felicity? and can he imagine he answers the end of his creation, if, neglecting this care of those talents, he give himself wholly up to pursue those pleasures that are common to him with the brutes?

The brutal appetites, and enjoyments, are nicely proportioned to their ends, the preservation and propagation of the animal: the appetites call regularly for what is necessary, and are fierce in proportion as the want is great; when the want is supplied, the desire ceases; excess satiates, palls the appetite, and disorders the machine.

It is not so with the mental pursuits, and pleasures; the mind is absolutely insatiable; the more it knows, the keener it thirsts after knowledge; its desires are endless, and the object infinite.

Besides the power of thinking, Man has the faculty of communicating by speech, and recording his thoughts. The observation of each individual, and within the compass of a short life, could not go very far in science; but we are so made, that each may be helped by the discoveries of each other; the desire of communicating knowledge is almost as strong as the desire to know; and, as the end of the capacity to know, is, manifestly, to discover the excellency of the Creator in his works, that the Man may be filled with admiration, and acknowledgment, it is impossible to doubt that the end of the faculty of speech is to express, and communicate to each other, what we severally discover, to enlarge our ideas of the

the divine perfections, and to join in expressions of acknowledgment, and praise.

It is not so with the Brute; that is made to shew, and not to know, the excellency of the Creator.

One difference there is, highly remarkable, between the meer animal and the rational creature: Nature produces, spontaneous, all that is necessary for the brute; whereas some art, besides industry, is necessary to make what nature furnishes useful, and comfortable, to man. The brute is clothed by Nature; the earth uncultivated produces the herb, the seed, the berry that is fit for its nutriment; raw meat suits the stomach of the carnivorous, nor is there any occasion for cookery, or dress. But it is otherwise with Man: tho' Nature furnish abundantly the materials, yet skill, and industry, is necessary to fit them for his use. By much the greatest part of the globe would be uninhabited, if industry did not furnish clothing; grains must be raised; the juice of grapes and fruits must be fermented, and meat must be prepared for the stomach before Man can make use of it.

Because Nature furnishes abundantly for all the occasions of the brute, they are each independent of the other, without connection, or society; except in a few instances where instinct calls them to it, because it is in those instances necessary for the preservation or propagation of the species.

But because men have occasion for the labour, the skill, the talents of each other, they are naturally social, and dependent on each other; they are fitted to promote the interests of each other. The soul is so made, as to reap satisfaction from acts of beneficence, to feel concern from the sufferings of its fellow-creatures, and to be knit in bonds of friendship and alliance with such as entertain the same sentiments.

Thus Nature has made men fit for society, as it has made society necessary for them; but the end of making society necessary for men, leads to a further consideration. No one can think that the infinitely wise, and powerful, could not have so framed men, that Nature, alone and unaided, should have supplied all their wants; but,

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if he had done so, solitude must have been the inclination of the rational creature, and no more of the perfection of the Creator would have been known, or celebrated, than what fell within the observation of each individual. But, as essential wisdom has disposed man, necessarily, for society, has provided them with proper faculties to communicate to each other their observations and their sentiments, and has furnished them with inclinations to make such communications, and to join in acts of acknowledgment and praise; it cannot be doubted that the chief, the high, and honourable end of fitting men for society, was to advance and propagate the knowledge of Nature, and of the Author of it, and to promote and perfect that exercise of the soul for which it was given to man.

When Man surveys his own species, framed for the contemplation of the works of God; fitted for admiring and adoring the author and supporter; so contrived as to aid each other in that great design, and to contribute to one another's happiness, not only in that, but in the common enjoyments of the animal life; he cannot help considering each individual as the immediate servant of the Creator; he cannot dispense with observing the close relation, and connection, between the whole, and the necessary dependence each has on the other.

And, when he recollects what pleasure results to the soul from consciousness of beneficent and merciful acts, what horror arises from the thoughts of cruelty and injustice, he must needs see his duty towards his fellow-servants, and with thankfulness acknowledge the goodness of the Creator, who has annexed immediate pleasure to each act of duty, and joined horror to transgression.

View then Man in his perfect state, as, from the ruins still remaining, we certainly know he must have been, Blessed with all the enjoyments that give relish to the animal life; Distinguished, from the rest of the visible creation, by that intelligent principle that enables him to see the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of the Author of nature in his works; Chosen to be a witness to the boundless perfections of the Eternal; Possessed of an
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insatiable desire of knowledge, and fresh discoveries pouring in upon him, without ceasing; Qualified to admire, to praise, and to adore, and perpetual occasions offering themselves for those rapturous exercises; Placed in society, with companions fitted for the like enjoyments, and so made as to promote his felicity, under ties of duty to them, but duty the performance whereof was necessarily to be rewarded with pleasure; Conscious of the favour of his infinitely powerful, and beneficent Creator, and therefore blessed in the exercise of perpetual thankfulness: View man, I say, in this light, and say whether imagination can suggest to itself a state of higher felicity, or conceive how man came by choice, and of his own free-will, to relinquish it?

Such was man! but view him in his present condition, and you see a creature still possessed of all those qualities that fitted him for seeing and enjoying the chief good, with supreme delight; but you see those talents monstrously and mischievously employed: those eyes, and that understanding, that were given to perceive with transport the perfections of the Creator in his works, are now no more employed in that glorious service; the heart, and the desire, that panted after, and rejoiced in the favour and protection of the fountain of goodness, have ceased to act upon that object; all the mental powers, all the springs of the heart, are still at work in search of felicity; but they seek for it where no real good is to be found, and contribute to the real misery of unfortunate man. The sovereign good neglected, all those talents, that were given for discovering and enjoying it, are turned to the improvement of those pleasures that man has in common with the brutes. The skill and industry of that intelligent creature, are occupied in pursuing the gratifications of the brutal appetites; and, in so doing, weaken and disable even those appetites from answering their real uses; or are employed in finding, and laying up means for such beastly gratifications. In the place of social affection and benevolence to mankind, malice, envy, fraud, rapine, murder prevail: in the

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place of God, love chuses Self for its object. Knowledge, if look'd after, is sought to gratify a vain, an useless curiosity, but not to lead to the source of knowledge, and life; in short, rebel to God, man sets up the vilest of his creatures in his room, and employs those faculties that were given for the service and enjoyment of the Eternal, in pursuits infinitely dishonourable, and offensive.

In this distressed, this frightful condition, human nature can hardly bear looking in upon itself: the crime, as well as the folly, is so monstrous, that serious reflection on it must sour all the silly enjoyments that men amuse themselves with, and create apprehensions which, without some foundation for hopes, would be absolutely intolerable; and therefore mankind, to avoid reflections so very disagreeable, suffer the active principle, intended to lead to God, to carry them away from one brutish pursuit to another: if any beam of light, darting in upon their soul, should shew them their duty, they shut it out, because it points out the forfeit; and, because the amazing long-suffering, and patience of the Deity, delays deserved punishment, unhappy mortals are ready to harden themselves into a belief that there is no God to be offended at their treason, or to flatter themselves with hopes, that, as they live like brutes, they shall die like brutes, and, by ceasing to be, escape vengeance.

Such is the depraved state of wretched mankind! and such the perverse turn of those whose minds are so debauched with brutal pleasures, as to like the beastly state in which they are. But they, in whom the image of God is not altogether defaced, who entertain honourable notions of the supreme Goodness, who see with wonder the long-suffering and forbearance of the infinitely Just, and who cannot conceive, that Essential Justice could dispense with vengeance for a moment, if some consideration of infinite value did not interpose, are willing to entertain hopes that some ransom may have been found for the offence of mankind, some expedient provided, by the wisdom and goodness of God, for obliterating their crimes, and restoring them to the favour and

protection of the Eternal ; and to have those hopes confirmed, and improved into a well-grounded and certain belief, is the chief object of their wishes, as it would be the only solid foundation of their happiness.

Whoever has the faintest glimpse of such hopes, if he acts rationally, will not cease enquiring, with the utmost earnestness and accuracy, till he discover whether there is any just foundation for them, or no ; he will consult nature, he will examine authorities, and will be equally solicitous not to admit insufficient, as he will be not to reject sufficient, evidence.

In such an enquiry, beginning with the natural light still remaining unextinguished, and carefully separating what does, from what does not flow from it ; examining the notions commonly received about the Deity, and comparing them with the dictates of reason, many propositions will appear demonstratively true. For example,

1. That the Deity is infinitely powerful, good, and intelligent, is deducible from nature.

2. That the Deity is merciful, so as to pardon sin, and to be reconcileable to sinners, is not deducible from nature.

3. That the Deity is possessed of qualities like to those in the soul of man, such as love, anger, compassion, is not deducible from nature.

4. That there is a plurality of Persons in the Deity, is not deducible from nature.

5. That man's sin, upon atonement, is to be pardoned, and he reconciled to the Deity, is not deducible from nature.

6. That the sufferings of a man, to whom one of the Persons of the Deity was to be joined, was to be that atonement, is not deducible from nature.

7. That the effect of this atonement and reconciliation, was to give all mankind a right to approach, and rely on the protection and beneficence of a placated Deity, is not deducible from nature.

8. That the Deity, thus appeased, is delighted with prayers and praises, is not deducible from nature.

9. That

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9. That there is a correspondence between the souls of men and the Deity, is not deducible from nature.

10. That the prayers of men are acceptable to the Deity, heard, and answered, through the intercession of that Person whose sufferings atoned for sin, is not deducible from nature.

If then these things concerning the Deity, and man's state, are true, and of absolute necessity to be known to man, for his comfort, and towards enabling him to perform any acceptable duty to his Creator, his knowledge must come by revelation, and that knowledge must be kept up by institutions, or records.

1. That there is such a thing as right and wrong, may, and must be known, without revelation.

2. That right must be attended with reward, and wrong with punishment, is known without revelation.

3. That therefore there must be a future state, for rewards and punishments, must be known without revelation.

4. That man is in a depraved state, at enmity with the Deity, is known without revelation; and must have been known so soon as that state of enmity began.

In this depraved state, man, attentive to his own circumstances, must have been in a condition infinitely wretched, the object of the just indignation of the Almighty, here and hereafter; helpless, and hopeless, because no defence against offended justice; and must have continued incapable of hope, or comfort, or of attempting any means of placating, or of obtaining the protection of the Deity, unless the mercy of God, and his acceptance of the atonement provided, had been revealed to him, with evidence of the authority of that revelation, so convincing as to gain absolute belief. This, and nothing less, could render life tolerable.

1. We know certainly that all men are, and from the

the earliest ages have been, in a state of enmity and corruption.

2. That men now have, and from the earliest times have had, comfort from a persuasion of mercy and forgiveness from God, contrary to reason, and the strongest evidence which from thence can result.

3. That the whole world, from the earliest times, used nearly the same rites, ceremonies, and institutions religious, for placating the Deity, averting wrath, procuring favour, returning thanks, by Sacrifices, Burnt-offerings, Blood; means that, in nature, have no sort of connection with the end proposed, and therefore could not possibly have had their origin from reason, or natural light.

And, as this belief, and these religious observances, prevailed over all mankind, without any support from, but rather contrary to reason, it is a just conclusion, that the authority for such a belief, and such observances, must have been exceeding high and strong; and man cannot think of any sufficient authority to have produced that universal faith, short of divine revelation.

The doctrine of remission of sins, and expiation by blood, is, till the secret is explained by revelation, so destitute of any foundation in reason, and apparently so contrary to it, that no *Reasoner* could ever have thought of it; and, if he had, no one could have given credit to it, without some convincing proof for the authority of that doctrine, which, as has been said, could not possibly have been from reason. The universal reception then of that doctrine, is a demonstration, in its own kind, that it had a divine authority.

If the Deity had determined to pardon man, by and through an Intercessor, and upon satisfaction, that would not have answered the end; unless man were acquainted with, and believed it, he would remain in the same gloomy state of despair, without the least glimpse of hopes, or encouragement to pray, to praise, to love, or to rejoice in the mercy and salvation of God; which would have left him a prey to his terrors and his lusts, and must have

have determined him to have shut out all thoughts of the Deity. For nothing could possibly determine man to hope, to pray, to praise, to serve, to rejoice in the protection of the Deity, but a firm conviction and belief that God was placated, would forgive, and protect, and was pleased with services.

If then it was the intention of God to pardon man, to restore him to a capacity of serving him, to reclaim him from his sinful state, to encourage him to love, fear, and serve his Creator; it was absolutely necessary, towards that design, to acquaint man with his intentions, to give such proof of those intentions as should convince and thoroughly persuade those to whom the revelation was made, and to preserve such evidence of that revelation to mankind as should be sufficient to support their faith and hope.

The lowest degree of faith that can possibly be sufficient to quiet the soul of man, and to restore him to a capacity of serving comfortably his God, and trusting to his favour and protection, is a firm conviction that God is placable, and will pardon upon repentance, and protect.

Whatever degree of evidence or revelation fixed this in man's mind, restored him quiet, and a possibility of endeavouring to gain the favour of God; and, supposing the belief absolute, must determine the man so believing, to seek and serve God, to the best of his ability and understanding.

They to whom the merciful intentions of God have been the most fully revealed, and to whom the evidence of that revelation has the most distinctly appeared, are in a much happier condition, and have many more incentives and helps to piety and devotion, than those who have just light enough to know that God is merciful, and to believe that he will pardon, upon repentance, and a hearty conversion of the desire of the soul towards him. But, if the belief of the latter is total and absolute, it may change his heart, and his course of life, and bring him within the favour and protection of his God. Hence faith, so much prized in the Old and New Testament;

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not that faith, as such, is of value ; but because, where it truly is, it must produce a change of soul, and obedience. No man, who verily believes any fruit to be poison, will taste it ; and let any man who knowingly sins, say what he will, he has not faith, when he so acts.

As this belief is absolutely necessary to all mankind, and must have been intended to reach them all, the evidence for inducing it, must be of that nature as to accommodate itself to all species of men. There must be that sort of evidence that leads the vulgar, the unthinking, the illiterate ; and there must be also such proof as shall determine the ingenious, the inquisitive, the learned.

By much the greatest part of mankind have no other evidence for this belief, than general received opinion ; what has been held by their fathers, and all their acquaintance, passes for truth, and produces resolutions and actions.

It is impossible to believe any thing more firmly, than the vulgar do that the earth stands still, and that the sun moves round : a belief as general, and as absolute, of the facts revealed for the comfort and salvation of mankind, would produce a conduct very different from what we see.

Where the common opinions about the devil, witches, witchcraft, &c. prevail, the belief is transmitted to posterity, and the children doubt as little as the fathers did.

If these things were true, and capable of demonstration, the vulgar would believe, not because of the demonstration, which they have not leisure, or learning, or capacity to enter into, but because of the fixed opinions of others, from whom they learn.

For, as they are not true, nay some of them demonstratively false, the vulgar believe them, because they are not qualified to examine the demonstration.

But, if there is not such evidence as is fit to satisfy the learned and the inquisitive, it cannot produce belief in them ; and the vulgar opinion cannot be of long continuance, where the learned and the inquisitive declare against it.

The evidence therefore attending revelation ought to be such as was fit to create and continue a very firm and general belief, and opinion, amongst the gross of mankind ;

kind; and to conquer, and answer the doubts and scruples of the inquisitive and the learned.

That the first publication of the merciful intentions of God to men, and the declaration of so much as he thought fit to reveal concerning himself, and what was to be done and believed, was attended with sufficient evidence to support the authority of the revelation, cannot be doubted, because the design was to gain belief.

And if, in every succeeding age, the same publication had been made, with the like evidence, there is no doubt we should have no unbeliever.

But, in fact, we see it has not pleased God to repeat, in this manner, the evidence of his revelation.

Nor is the not repeating the evidence, to satisfy the curiosity of impertinent and presumptuous objectors, who measure the conduct of the Deity by their own vain imaginations, any just cause of doubting the original revelation, if the proofs of that revelation are sufficient to induce belief.

God could have prevented man's sinning originally; he could have restored him absolutely to his pristine state; and he could have continued standing and perpetual obvious miracles, for confirming revelation: but he has done neither of these. And, though no other answer could be given to the question, Why has he not? but that it has not suited his wise scheme, for the government of his Grace to man, it is beyond all doubt sufficient.

If it was the scheme of the Deity,

To create man perfect, with a capacity of retaining that perfection, or of falling from it, which we call liberty, without interposing farther, to determine him either to the one, or to the other;

To restore him to a capacity of regaining happiness, by publishing means of salvation, with divine or supernatural evidence, and appointing the most feasible means for continuing the belief of that revelation, without farther interposing, till the ill use of the free-will, or liberty of man, made farther interposition necessary; and

To display omnipotent power, or remarkable events, when the notable defection of mankind made it necessary,

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in order to confirm or restore the revelation, at that time, and to produce still stronger and stronger evidence for it, to succeeding generations; who dare presume to find fault with such economy?

Who can tell what wise ends the Deity may have to answer by shewing, in the several stages of the world, and under the different degrees of light and information, what use the heart of man was to make of free-will, and of the mercy of God offered?

If it was the intention of the Deity to reveal to man the method of Salvation; That a Saviour was to come in the flesh, by his death and suffering to atone for sin; and that the Saviour, having abolished sin by his sufferings, was to become intercessor for man, to reconcile him to the Deity, and produce communication between them; no doubt this might be, by convincing evidence, intimated and published at first: and the question is, What would be the most proper method for continuing to posterity the belief of the truth so revealed?

It does not appear that, in the earliest times, writing by letters, or recording facts, any other way, than by emblematical or hieroglyphical representations, was known or in use.

And, if writing by letters had been in use, such writing, to prove it of divine authority to succeeding generations, would require evidence.

Tradition surely was one way; but that, without other help, not very certain, and liable to infinite mistakes; as well as the authority of it, for that reason, liable to doubt.

But, if to Tradition were added certain constant, ritual, and emblematical observances, at fixed times, for ever to be continued and endure; then, in proportion as the emblems were expressive, and universally received, the memory and belief of the matter represented would remain distinct and strong, and the end of recording be obtained.

Anniversary, monthly, weekly days observed, preserve fresh the memory of most events.

If therefore it was the command of God, that, to

keep in mind the revelation that a Saviour, the first-born of a woman, should die for the sins of men, should by his blood atone, and become Intercessor for mankind, Man should kill a kid, or a lamb, shed its blood, sprinkle the blood towards the same place which the Deity directed to be emblematical of the place of its residence, chusing a perfect, unspotted male, as the emblem of the suffering Saviour, and a perfect first-born amongst men, as the emblem of the first-born, the Intercessor; and, if this emblematical act was to be repeated once, or oftener, every year, on a stated day; once every moon, on the first day; once every week, on the seventh day; and twice every day, morning and evening; and if, on those occasions, men were in the emblems to see, with sorrow, the representation of the blood they forfeited, and, with joy, to entertain the hopes of mercy through that blood, which the blood of the beast sacrificed represented; and to believe that God, on those occasions, was willing to hear their prayers, and receive their praises: the invention of man cannot devise any other method, so likely to preserve and perpetuate the knowledge and belief of a revelation, so necessary to mankind.

Men, indeed, might err, after a course of generations, in the exposition and application of those emblems, and emblematical actions; and, when the true sense and intention of them was varied, or in any degree lost, imagination would suggest other, and different, nay even false meanings; but, so long as the observance remained, a belief of placating the Deity by blood must remain: which belief is, of all others, the most unreasonable, except as it is explained, by the original, and only true sense and meaning, of the emblems and institutions.

Thus, what was intended by the priest's intercessory office, was lost, though officiating by a priest remained; what was intended by the first-born's being to discharge the priestly office, was forgot, long before men ceased to look upon the right of priesthood to be in the first-born; what was intended by sacrificing a *perfect* MALE, was lost, whilst great accuracy was employed to take care that nothing but what was perfect should be sacrificed; nay,
such

such was the weakness of mankind, that they forgot the blood shed was *typical* and *emblematical* only, and imagined a real virtue in it; than which nothing could be more absurd: but still they continued with the greatest zeal to make use of sacrifice, to believe it a mean of atoning for sins, of averting punishments, of procuring favours from the Deity; they thought Sacrifice made their prayers and praises acceptable, that there was something sacred in it, that it bound contracts and covenants of all kinds, and that the Deity expected and required sacrifice of them, and would be highly offended if that service was discontinued.

So that, notwithstanding all the errors, wanderings, and false imaginations of mankind, they still retained, by this EMBLEMATICAL INSTRUCTION, a strong belief that the Deity was placable, and that sins were forgivable: which left it possible for them to hope, and to endeavour to gain the divine favour, and consequently to love and serve the Deity. And the perpetual and universal use of sacrifice, with particular rites, and under particular observances, after the original meaning and intention of them was lost, is a proof, not only of their divine origin, but also of the reality of that sacrifice which those emblems were intended to represent.

The original and primary use of sacrifice, and of all other religious institutions, was commemorative of the original revelation, a sort of daily MEMORIAL, or Record, of what God declared, and man believed and hoped. But, as the declaration of God regarded a future event, every one, almost, of those institutions and emblematical ordinances, must be looked upon also as prophetic; which, when the event predicted happened, proves a demonstration, much above what HUMANITY could invent, of the Divinity of the INSTITUTION, and of the certainty of the hopes and belief founded on that event.

Besides the original intention of being commemorative and predictive, there was a very useful design in the *annual, monthly, weekly, and daily* Services, to give men frequent occasions of searching into themselves, as in the presence of the Deity; of confessing, worshipping, and

adoring ; and so reforming, and preserving their minds from folly. This, in time, they mistook for the chief end, forgetting the *chief end* almost entirely ; and, at last, they greatly corrupted even the secondary design, imagining that there was merit in the sacrifice, as such ; that the Deity loved sacrifice, and expected it, as a tribute that was due : though God never required Sacrifice (it is in this sense the Scripture says so) for his own sake, as one may say, but instituted it for the sake of men, as a memorial to keep in mind what he had revealed. To this end was the frequency ; as well as to give frequent opportunities of worship, the true service of the heart, and reflection, which vain man almost entirely forgot.

As the antiquity, and universality of sacrifice, notwithstanding the various corruptions, with which, by the imaginations of men, it was infected, is a proof of its divine original ; so is the ridiculous POLYTHEISM of antiquity, evidence, in some degree, of a *plurality* of PERSONS in the Deity ; as the opinion, in all appearance, must have flowed from some revelation, or institution, for preserving the memory and knowledge of that revelation.

Nothing is more remote from any foundation in reason, than the doctrine of the TRINITY ; and therefore it is a fair conclusion, that it must be owing to REVELATION, real or supposed.

As inconsistent as the TRINITY seems to be with reason, *Polytheism* is no less so ; all nature speaks for ONE Deity, and even the doctrine of the TRINITY supposes it.

And yet in almost all the ancient nations we find *Polytheism* established ; they had a plural to the noun God : nay, the eldest of all languages, the *Hebrew*, uses almost always the plural noun ELOHIM, when speaking of the Deity, frequently joined with plural verbs ; though the Scripture, the only book extant in that language, takes care to let us know that this plural ELOHIM is but one Deity.

Now, as the knowledge of the TRINITY, if true, must be had by REVELATION, and not by REASON ;
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if the Deity was pleased to disclose so much of ITS own nature to mankind, IT must do it by referring to ideas taken from natural things; and, if the knowledge of that discovery was to be recorded, whilst *hieroglyphical* or *emblematical* was the only WRITING, there must be a conjunction of *three Emblems* in *one*, to represent what was intended. Such conjunctions, by *Egyptian* and other monuments yet extant, appear to have been very frequent in earlier times, and very probably owed their origin to the *lawful emblems* first proposed by the Deity; and the word in the *Hebrew* used to signify the IMAGE or Representation of the Deity, carried about as an IDOL, is plural also, [TERAPHIM], though relating only to one *image* or *idol*.

The imagination of man, however, as in the case of sacrifice, dropping the only rational thing, the UNITY, made use of the plurality of Persons in the one Deity, to evin a plurality of Deities; and, by retaining that notion against all reason, gives ground to conclude that it must have flowed from some very high, though mistaken original, and to enquire what the fountain of so extraordinary an opinion may have been.

As the *imagination* of man, proceeding from one mistake to another, must, at last, have obliterated the knowledge of all REVELATION, notwithstanding the wisest precaution to preserve it; it behoved the Deity, persisting stedfast in the purpose of mercy to mankind, to renew that REVELATION from time to time, and to rectify abuses, with such authority, for the renewal and rectification, as was sufficient evidence of the truth of what was *revealed*; and, if that merciful and perfect Being was to shut up all REVELATION, and to cease from farther interposition by extraordinary appearances amongst men, it behoved him to make the REVELATION so compleat, and to leave it so fixed and unalterable, and attended with such evidence for the truth of it, as should leave no further room for error or doubt, amongst those who, with respectful hearts to the Deity, sought after the truth.

Though it is extremely obvious, that such a REVELATION

LATION and RECTIFICATION must have been ; yet, seek for it amongst all the monuments, the wisdom, the records of the Heathen world, and you shall seek in vain ; nothing but vanity and madness. The wisest of them, at least of those that have come to our hands, seem to have known little of MAN'S *fallen, desperate state* ; and, when they turned their thoughts to Religion, appear to have known nothing further than a parcel of the lies and forgeries of their Priests.

So that, if any of the ancient Heathens wrote before their REVELATION was totally corrupted, it is lost ; having been neglected by their successors, who did not understand what it meant.

But, in looking over mankind, as they are at this day, we find a NATION in very particular circumstances, Distinguished from all the People that are, or perhaps ever were upon the face of the earth ; the CHILDREN, as they believe, of one Man ; Professing a Religion different from that of all the Nations that now are scattered up and down the whole earth ; Without dominion, power, or property any where ; Tenacious, to death, of their own Religion and Opinions ; for that reason despised, hated, oppressed and persecuted ; and yet, subsisting in so prodigious numbers, that, were they to be brought together, they would prove a mighty People.

Examining the history of this People, (I mean the *Jews*), we find they were very Powerful about 2000 years ago ; Possessed of a country, their own, and called by their own Name ; in the full Exercise of a Religion, with Ceremonies, and Services peculiar to themselves ; in a firm Belief, derived from their *holy Books*, which they held to be REVELATION, that some very extraordinary *Person*, of their blood and kindred, should then arise, who should deliver them from all their Enemies, and set up a Kingdom above all the Kingdoms of the earth.

We find some time after, that, encouraged by this opinion, they quarrelled with the *Romans* ; and, after the most obstinate defence that ever people made, were utterly overthrown, their City and Temple destroyed,
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and those that escaped the sword, scattered up and down over the face of the earth.

We find that the particularity of their Faith and Service, the distinction that subsisted between them and other Nations, and the seditiousness and mutiny of their Deportment, founded on the persuasion of a great DELIVERER to come, brought total dissipation upon them; so that they became every where the object of severe laws and ill usage.

And we find, nevertheless, that for near 1700 years they have remained, under all these distresses and difficulties, a *People* distinct from those they live amongst, tenacious of their own Religion and Observances, not to be bribed or frightened from them, and fully convinced their Religion is immediately from God, and that the great DELIVERER, for them, is still to come.

A Circumstance so very singular calls for extraordinary attention. Of the many Nations and Kindreds famous for Prowess, for Laws, for religious Opinions, is there any that remained, that preserved their Name after a Conquest? Did not all mix and blend themselves with the Conqueror? Of all the Religions that ever have been, did any stick so close to the profession of it, that, for a series of Ages, they did not forsake it for the Religion of the Country they became subjects of; that infamy and oppression could not drive them from it, but rather riveted them the stronger in it?

And this is still the more amazing, that the Religion they hold, is of all others the most absurd, as they understand it; and that the hopes they entertain are, undoubtedly, chimerical and false.

Enquire of this People, and you shall find their Faith is founded on a *Book*, which contains their LAW, said to have come immediately from God, the HISTORY of this Nation, and certain HYMNS, and PROPHECIES, all which they firmly believe to have been written by Divine Inspiration, and to contain the WILL, and WORD of God.

This *Book* they entertain with the highest esteem, and preserve with such scrupulous exactness, that there are
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in the *Copies* of it fewer various readings than in any other Book extant ; that they have never suffered a various reading, how true soever, to enter into the text ; and that, as fond as they are of their method of *Pointing*, for varying the sound, and thereby the sense in some degree, of the *Hebrew* words, they have never dared to add those *Points* to the *Copies* of their *LAW* read in their Synagogues, believing that such an addition would be a profanation.

That this *Book* is not fictitious, nor in any part forged to gratify the vanity of the *Jews*, but, when first given to them, came with authority sufficient to enforce the reception of it, will appear to those who look into it, from this observation ; That, throughout, the *Jews* are described as the vilest, the wickedest of all men ; They are severely reprov'd for their faults ; *DESTRUCTION* is threatened ; nay it is, formally, and over and over again, predicted, that they shall be *confounded* ; that they shall be *dark*, and *blind* ; that the *Book* which they keep, shall be *sealed up* from them ; that they *shall not understand*, and therefore shall be *rejected* ; and the *Nations*, at large, taken to be the *People* of God, in their room.

Receiving the *Book* originally, with such a sting in it, shews the Authority was high ; preserving it entire, without striking out or altering such passages, proves the *Book* was held sacred : Not to mention, here, the argument arising for the authority of the *Book*, from the exact completion of the Predictions.

The first cursory view of this *Book* must fill any man, who has looked into all the *Remains* of the ancient Learning, Philosophy, and Religion of the *Nations*, with a strong prepossession in its favour. Amongst all these, nothing but folly and impertinence is to be met with ; no tolerable Idea of the Deity ; none of the Duty of Man, from the true motive ; none at all of the chief and peculiar Felicity of the human race, in the enjoyment of the favour of God.

But in this *Book*, from one end to the other, the Praises of God, described as *One, Spiritual, Infinite, Eternal,*
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Merciful, Gracious, Long-suffering, Just, Powerful, in short, *infinitely Perfect*, are every where to be met with. The Duty of Man is placed where it ought to be; and the Felicity of man is described to consist in the enjoyment of the favour of the Deity, to be obtained by conforming to the Will of God, and yielding him the heart. This is the language, the spirit of the whole; nothing contradictory to this, whatever vain men may fancy, to the contrary, from some ill understood passages.

This Reflection will not be so prevailing with the unlearned; who, in the most common books since the *Christian Era*, meet with the most just, and at the same time the most noble and sublime ideas; which are all, tho' they do not know so much, taken from the *Jews* sacred *Book*: but it will be very cogent with those that have read all the *Remains* of the Heathen World, prior to Christianity; and who alone can make the comparison, and see the peculiarity of the character of this *Book*, as it differs from all others, the productions of Men.

This *Book*, taken all together, seems intended to promote Religious respect and service to the Deity, and to raise strong hopes and confidence of mercy and felicity.

It contains a compleat system of SACRIFICATURE, with all the rites and religious observances thereto belonging, said to be delivered to the Children of *Israel* by the Deity, in the most solemn manner, by the hands of *Moses*.

This System, which is called the *LAW*, or the *DIRECTORY*, is said to have been published by the Deity, in a manner attended with great signs and wonders, in the presence of all the people, as to some part of it; and, as to the rest, by *Moses*, to whose authority God, by very surprising miracles, gave credit.

This *LAW* is said to have been reduced into *Writing* by *Moses*, at the command of God, to be for ever preserved, and observed; with promises of perpetual felicity, in case of observing, and threats of *BLINDNESS* and *DESTRUCTION*, to the whole Nation, in case of not observing it.

This *LAW* was given to the children of *Israel*, the issue

due of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*; to each of whom it was promised, that out of their seed should arise *That* which should bless the whole earth. This people is said to have been, by the immediate providence of God, kept distinct from all other Nations, till the LAW was directly given to them; and then, by the very tenor and tendency of that LAW, was to remain distinct from all other people, so long as their Nation subsisted.

By the scheme of this INSTITUTION it appears, That the people were to be under the immediate government of the Deity; to possess a fruitful land, in the middle of the then best peopled part of the earth; that God was to be in a particular manner present with them, to be consulted with, in a sacred place, (first in the *Tabernacle*, and then in the *Temple*), by sacred Rites, and to give decisions, and directions; and that, from time to time, he was to raise up Prophets to admonish, rebuke, and direct.

Besides the Writings ascribed to *Moses*, called the LAW, the *Book* contains the HISTORY of the Nation from *Moses's* time to their first *Captivity*, for their defection from God, predicted first in the Law, and afterwards by succeeding Prophets.

It contains the writings and predictions of several Prophets, and the PSALMS, or religious HYMNS of the Nation, employed in the Divine Service, and composed by inspired men, for the use of the people.

In these HYMNS, and other writings, a system of the faith and hope of the enlightened *Jews* is to be met with; the true meaning and use of EMBLEMS, SYMBOLS and TYPES is explained; errors in practice and opinion are reproved; the expectation of mercy and salvation by a Divine Person is raised; that Person is, under various representations, described; the change of the, then, present INSTITUTION for a better is intimated; the BLINDNESS, and total defection, and destruction of the *Jews*, with their *State* and *Temple*, is predicted; the CALLING into their room the *Gentiles* is foretold; and the time, for that great event, limited and described with characters and marks that cannot be mistaken.

If the *Book*, then, that contains all these things be Divine,

vine, it is plain that God did not leave Man without farther assistance to aid and induce his faith, after promulgation of Peace, but that he renewed the *glad TYDINGS*; as, from the nature of the thing, ought to have been done.

And, if it shall appear to be true, that the manner in which he renewed that Revelation has furnished a demonstrative, permanent evidence, which never needs to be renewed, of his grace and favour to lost Man, it calls for belief, and the highest acknowledgment of his mercy and wisdom.

If the history of *Moses*, his miracles, his communication with the Deity, is true, there is no possibility to call in question the truth of what he delivers.

As the LAW, and INSTITUTION founded by *Moses*, was to establish Religion, and to make Mercy and Peace known to the whole Earth, the Writings ascribed to him begin with the CREATION, and carry down a general account of the concerns of mankind, till the Election of *Abraham* and his Seed.

The thing *Moses* begins with, is the CREATION of the HEAVENS and the EARTH by the Deity; which, though true to the conviction of all mankind, no ancient *Wise-man* ever found out. Here is no ridiculous *Theogonia*, no eternal *Chaos*, no fortuitous concourse of Atoms; but a fair and a true declaration, *In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth*.

He further takes notice of the Institution of the Sabbath; which, though the Ancients observed, they knew not the reason, or occasion of.

The declaration of this undiscovered truth, gives strong prepossession in favour of the rest.

The next important thing is, that Man fell from a state of innocence. This, as has been said, every living man must find to be true, upon examination; and yet none of the *Wise*, whose works have come to us, ever thought of it: nothing more certain, nothing more important to be attended to; nothing less known: but this *Moses* distinctly relates as the cause, or at least the occasion, of every thing that followed.

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The third thing he marks is, the confusion, and desperate state, in which man was, upon the FALL; ashamed of his fault, without hope in the mercy of God, and therefore studious to hide himself from him. This, the FALL being true, must necessarily be true too; and therefore we readily believe *Moses*.

The fourth thing he relates is, that God revealed his purpose of mercy to Mankind, and thereby delivered them from dread, despair, and confusion. The words in which *Moses* relates the promise of mercy, are, *That the Seed of the Woman should bruise the head of the Serpent, and the Seed of the Serpent should bruise his heel.*

These words, which are all that is said, do not, it is true, say that this *Seed of the Woman* should be sacrificed; though *bruising the heel* looks mighty like the suffering of the lower and least noble part of that *Seed*; nor do they say that sacrifice, and the other observances of the LAW were then instituted: but it appears plainly, that, soon after, *Cain* and *Abel* offered, and that at a stated or appointed time; it appears *Noah* sacrificed, and that, in his days, Man was commanded to abstain from eating BLOOD, as a thing sacred; it appears the *Patriarchs* did so, without any precedent, institution, or commandment, recorded, and that their Sacrifices were respected by the Deity; and it appears that all the nations of the Earth, who sprung from the first PARENTS, practised Sacrifice, with nearly the same rites: Wherefore, it may fairly be concluded, that Sacrifice, and the rites thereto belonging, were instituted upon the first promulgation of the EVANGELIUM, the tydings of mercy, and from that institution were transmitted to all mankind; and it would imply an absurdity to suppose, that this EMBLEMATICAL, COMMEMORATIVE observance was instituted without man's knowing the reason and meaning of it.

We know by History, without the help of *Moses*, that all Mankind sacrificed in hopes of mercy; from Reason we discover, that those hopes must have been founded on REVELATION, and that Sacrifice (which of itself could signify nothing) must have been no more than a memorial, by Institution: and now from *Moses* we learn, that those

those hopes were actually founded on explicate revelation by the God of Nature; and that Sacrifice, which the same God says in itself signifies nothing, was practised, just after, by the favourites of the Deity, and acceptable to him; and that he gave a new model of that Institution, correcting abuses, in the wilderness.

We learn, next, from *Moses*, that God was pleased at different times to appear to, and converse with Men, *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*; and that, nevertheless, men corrupted themselves so monstrously, an early instance whereof is *Cain's* killing his brother *Abel*, that the Deity brought on a FLOOD, which destroyed the whole earth, and with it all men, except *Noah* and his family.

This FLOOD all ancient Nations have confused tradition about; and though *Exuviae*, still remaining near the surface of the Earth, give very strong evidence of it, yet there is no sensible account of it from the *Ancients*; which strongly raises the credit and authority of *Moses's* Writings.

By the direction to take into the ARK a greater number of *clean* than of *unclean* beasts, and by *Noah's* practice, immediately after the FLOOD, of sacrificing of every *clean* beast and bird, it is evident the distinction of *clean* and *unclean* does not depend originally on the LAW of *Moses*, but has its origin before the FLOOD, probably at the first publication of *Grace* to *Adam*.

As the FLOOD destroyed all the corrupted, and to *Noah* and his family was demonstration of the power of, and obedience due to, the Deity, this great event was a total Extirpation of all false Religion; and, humanly speaking, it was to be hoped the faith and religious service of men would have continued long pure.

But that was not the case: for, as *Adam's* son *Cain* sinned early, so did *Noah's* son *Ham*; he merited to be pronounced accursed of his father, soon after the deliverance from the FLOOD. And, before the memory of that dreadful judgment was lost, men meditated the setting up a false Religion and Service to the *Heavens* at *Babel*; which the Deity disappointed, by confounding

and dividing their IMAGINATIONS, so that they separated and dispersed at that time.

As *Moses* relates the destruction of the *Antediluvian* world by the FLOOD, so he gives an account of repopling the earth by the three sons of *Noah*, giving a brief abstract of the Descent of the families from these three sons : and it is extremely remarkable, and strongly confirms the truth of *Moses's* history, that, from the most accurate and judicious inquiry into the *prophane* records and monuments extant, it does appear the world has been repopled in the manner which *Moses* describes, and nearly about the same time, counting backwards from known *periods*, by the justest rules.

After the account given of the irreligious attempt at *Babel*, of the descent of mankind from *Noah's* sons, and of the peopling of the earth, *Moses* begins the history of the *Jewish* Nation, descended from *Abraham*, who was sprung of *Sem*. This history, as to certain events, is very particular : It describes *Abraham* as called, immediately by God, away from a family and land that had begun to corrupt itself, to enter into a formal covenant with God : It describes the promise of the land of *Canaan* to *Abraham*, and to his seed, which is expressed in very extraordinary terms : It describes the same promise repeated to *Isaac*, and to *Jacob* : It relates the institution of CIRCUMCISION, (which, if instituted before, seems to have been left off), to be observed by the whole race of *Abraham* : It relates the manner of the Children of *Israel's* going into *Egypt*, their bitter servitude there, and their separation from the *Egyptians* : It records their miraculous deliverance by the hand of *Moses* : It relates their long sojourning in the wilderness, and their progress toward the land promised : It relates the miraculous and surprising manner of the promulgation of the LAW by the Deity, with extraordinary signs and wonders : It records all the Rites and Ceremonies of the *Sacrificature*, and of the whole religious service of the *Jewish* Church : It records the Constitution of the *Jewish* civil government, which, as well as the religious, had God for its head : It describes the Tabernacle, the residence
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of the supreme Governor, till the Temple should be built : It records the promise of the *Advent* of another *Prophet*, like unto *Moses*, who was to be heard : It relates a formal cutting off the *Type* of the predicted PURIFIER, or the renewal thereof, and the Terms upon which the People should partake of the benefit of that PURIFICATION, commonly translated a COVENANT *between God and the People* ; wherein strict obedience is promised on the part of the people, and, on that condition, great and perpetual blessings promised on the part of God ; but a manifest prediction is, at the same time, made, of the people's defection, and of their future destruction.

And the end of all this surprising disposition, and oeconomy, manifestly is to record, with great accuracy, the LAW with its several RITES and CEREMONIES, and to recommend the exact observance of it ; to the end it never should be lost, or fall out of the view and knowledge of Mankind ; but the particulars of it, and the Authority by which it was promulgated, should remain attested, to future generations, by better and stronger evidence than any other matter of fact ever was amongst men.

And, if the giving this LAW, and the selecting and constituting this *people* to be the depositaries of it, in this manner, was the immediate act of God, it must certainly be of infinite consequence to have had that LAW so recorded, and preserved ; and yet, if you look only at the obvious and outside appearance of that LAW, it was of little or no use, and the observance of it has ceased many hundred years ago, and is now, without a miracle, become impracticable ; whereas, viewing it in the light already hinted, it becomes the evidence of all hope and faith.

The evidence the *Jews* had to believe the several matters related by *Moses*, preceding the deliverance from *Egypt*, was, so far as we know, no more than *Moses's* word ; whose credit was sufficiently established by the testimonies given to him by the Deity ; but, at the

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same time, it is not certain that they had not some distinct tradition concerning these things.

But, as to his authority, and the authority of the Laws and Institutions given by him, they had; and their children, and we who take it from their children, have the strongest evidence the nature of the thing is capable of. For,

1st, The whole People, an infinite multitude, were witnesses of all the miracles wrought preceding the deliverance from *Egypt*, and of the final miracle that achieved their deliverance; in memory whereof, the PASSOVER, an annual solemnity, was instituted, with the strongest injunctions, to acquaint their children with the cause of that observance, and to mark that night throughout all their generations for ever.

2^{dly}, The whole People were witnesses to the miracle in passing the *Red Sea*, and sung that hymn which *Moses* composed on that occasion, which was preserved for the use of their children.

3^{dly}, The whole People were witnesses to the dreadful Promulgation of the LAW from *Sinai*, with which they were also to acquaint their children, and the feast of PENTECOST was annually to be observed on the day on which that Law was given; besides that the very Tables in which the ten COMMANDS were written, were deposited in the Ark, and remained, at least, till the building of *Solomon's Temple*, and probably till the destruction of it.

4^{thly}, The whole People were witnesses to the many miracles wrought, during the space of forty years, in the wilderness; to the *Pillar of FIRE and CLOUD*, to the MANNA, QUAILS, &c. a sample of the MANNA remained to future generations; and they were directed to relate what they saw to their children.

5^{thly}, The whole People were witnesses to the framing and building of the Ark, and Tabernacle; they were all contributors to it; they saw the CLOUD fill, and rest upon it, and they assisted at the Services performed there; and, to commemorate this, as well as their
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their sojourning in tents in the wilderness, the annual Feast of TABERNACLES was appointed, which, in succeeding years, they were to explain to their children.

As these things were absolutely sufficient to satisfy the children of *Israel*, then in being, touching the authority and obligation of this LAW, several things were added to enforce the observance, and to preserve the memory and evidence of what was to be observed.

1st, The LAW was by *Moses*, at the command of God, put into *Writing*, for the greater certainty, as well as all the directions for making the ARK, the CHE-RUBIM, the TABERNACLE, the *Priests* GARMENTS, &c. and all the Rules of GOVERNMENT, JUDICA-TURE, &c. with every other circumstance revealed, for directing the faith and the conduct of the Nation.

2^{dly}, This LAW was to be preserved, perused, and attended to, in the most careful manner; The *Priests*, who were to judge in questions relating to it, must be well versed in it; The *King*, who was to rule over the Nation, was to write out a *Copy* of it for himself, and to peruse it continually; And the *People* were to write out passages of it, and to wear them, by way of *Signs*, upon their Hands, and of *Frontlets*, between their Eyes, and to write them upon the posts of their doors, &c. And they were to teach their children the most notable parts of it, and particularly to instruct them in the miracles attending the deliverance from *Egypt*, as they sat in their house, as they walked by the way, as they lay down, and as they rose up, &c.

3^{dly}, Besides the authority that promulgated the LAW, there was a solemn COVENANT and Agree-ment between God and the people, whereby the people became bound to keep, preserve, and observe this LAW, and all that was contained in it; and God became bound to be the God of the *Israelitish* People, to protect, and prosper them: and this COVENANT, to-wards the end of their sojourning in the wilderness, was solemnly renewed.

4^{thly},

4^{thly}, The particulars of this COVENANT, upon God's part, were, to give the people *the good land of Canaan, a land flowing with milk and honey*; to preserve and protect them in it; to give them perpetual indurance, and victory over their and his enemies; to prosper them in all their labours; to give them the increase of their fields, and flocks; and to make them a great, a happy, and a flourishing people; on condition that they kept and obeyed his LAW.

5^{thly}, The particulars, on the part of the People, were, to serve *Jehovah*, and no other God, in the way directed by the LAW; to preserve, observe, and obey the LAW carefully and exactly; and, if they failed or transgressed, to submit and consent to the severe sanction of the LAW and COVENANT, which, in many instances, was, to individuals transgressing, death, [*to be cut off from the people*], and to the bulk of the People, DESTRUCTION, CAPTIVITY, DISPERSION, BLINDNESS, MADNESS, &c. besides the forfeiture of all the good promises.

6^{thly}, Besides the other blessings, and pre-eminences, God was, by some special visible Symbol of his presence, to reside continually with the people; first, in the Tabernacle, which was made in the wilderness for that end, and, afterwards, in the Temple; whence he was to give judgment and directions, and to answer prayers, and accept of vows.

7^{thly}, This COVENANT was also reduced into writing, and was the tenure by which the *Israelites* held the land of *Canaan*, and on which all their hopes were founded: wherefore it must in all generations be considered by them as a thing of no small moment.

As God was the head of this STATE, and as the people held immediately their land of him; so he made several Regulations for holding that property, that are very remarkable.

1st, The Land was by his command divided into twelve lots, one for each *Tribes*, and they were put in pos-

possession accordingly, to the exclusion of the tribe of *Levi*, who for their portion had no more than what attended the service of God's house, and some Cities, with Suburbs, dispersed amongst other Tribes.

2dly, Not only were the descendents of each Tribe to enjoy, in exclusion of other Tribes, their own lot, but the particular fields and parcels, within each Tribe, were to remain for ever with the respective families that first possessed them, and, on failure of the Issue of the Possessor, to the nearest of that family: Hence, all lands sold returned at the *Jubilee* to the Proprietor, or his nearest a-kin; he who had right to *avenge blood*, might redeem.

3dly, This right of *Blood*, depending upon knowledge of descent and genealogy, made it absolutely necessary for the children of *Israel* to keep very exact records and proofs of their descent; not to mention the expectation they had of something, surprisingly singular, from the many promises made to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, that the BLESSING to mankind should spring from their seed; and, in tracing their genealogy, we see they were very critical, upon their return from *Babylon*: so that, before their Records were disturbed by the Captivity, it could not well be otherwise, but that every body of any note amongst the *Jews* could tell you the name of his Ancestor, who first had the Family-possession, in the days of *Joshua*, and how many degrees, and by what descent, he was removed from him. And as these first Possessors, pursuant to the custom of the Nation, must have been described by their fathers name, 'tis highly probable, they could have quoted by name that Ancestor who saw the miracles in *Egypt*, who saw the LAW given, who entered into the COVENANT, and who contributed to the setting up the ARK and TABERNACLE.

4thly, The very surprising care taken by the Deity to keep the breed of the *Jews* pure, and genuine, by the proofs of VIRGINITY, and by the miraculous *Waters of JEALOUSY*, is a circumstance that merits attention, and will easily induce a belief that

that Descent and Birth was a matter much minded amongst them. And,

5thly, The appointment and observance of the *Sabbatical* year, and, after the seventh *Sabbatical* year, a year of JUBILEE, for the general release of debts, lands, &c. is a circumstance of great moment, not only as these notable PERIODS were useful towards the easy computation of time, but as it made enquiry into TITLES, and consequently genealogy, necessary every fiftieth year; and as the cessation from culture, every seventh year, gave continual occasions for the Deity's displaying his power in increasing the Crop of the sixth, pursuant to his promise.

Now, taking these circumstances together under consideration, could any human precaution have provided more means to keep up the memory and evidence of any fact? Could this have been done by human foresight or force? Has any thing like to it ever been in the world besides?

What could tend more to perpetuate the memory of any event, than to deliver a whole People, by publick glorious miracles, from intolerable slavery? To publish a very extraordinary system of Laws immediately from heaven? To put this Law in writing, together with the Covenant for the obeying it? To make the tenure of the possessions of the felicity of that people depend on the observance of this Law? To appoint annual solemnities for keeping the LAW, and the giving of it, in mind? To appoint *signs* for the hands, and *frontlets* for the face, by way of MEMORANDUMS? To injoin perpetual private instruction by the parent to the children? To make the tenure of the Estates depend on the original division of the Land, to men who saw the miracles, and first took possession, and on the proximity of relation, by descent, to them? To appoint a return of Lands every fiftieth year, which should give perpetual occasion to canvass those descents? To order a *Sabbath* every seventh year for the Land, the loss of which should be supplied by the preceding year's increase? And to select a whole tribe, consisting of many thousands, to be the Guardians,
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in some degree the Judges and the Executors, of this LAW; who were barred from any portion of the land, in common with their brethren, and were contented with the contributions that came from the other tribes, without any fixed portion amongst them? This must keep up the belief and authority of that LAW amongst the descendents of that *People*, or nothing could: and if such a belief, under all these circumstances, prevailed amongst a people so constituted, that belief could not possibly proceed from imposture; because the very means provided, for proof of the truth, are so many checks against any possibility of imposition.

If any man will suggest, that the LAW of the *Jews* is no more than human invention, and that the *Book of the LAW* is a forgery; let him say when it was imposed upon that *People*, or at what PERIOD it possibly could have been imposed upon them, so as to gain belief, later than the PERIOD they mention, and under other circumstances than those they relate.

Could the whole *People* have been persuaded, at any one PERIOD, by any Impostor, that they were told severally by their fathers, and they by theirs, that the LAW was given with such circumstances, and under such promises, and threats, if they were not really told so; or that they, throughout all their generations, had worn certain passages of the LAW by way of FRONTLETS and SIGNS, if it had not really been so?

Could the whole *People* have been persuaded to submit to the pain of death, upon all the offences the LAW makes capital, unless their fathers had done so, upon evidence of the authority of that LAW?

Could the whole *People* have been persuaded that they had kept exact Genealogies, in order to intitle them to the blessing, and to their inheritances severally, unless they actually had done so?

Could the whole *People* believe that they had kept PASSOVERS, *Feasts of TABERNACLES*, &c. down from the date of the LAW, commemorative of the great events they relate to, unless they had really done so?

Could the Children of *Israel* have been imposed on to receive

receive an ARK, and a TABERNACLE, then forged, and a compleat set of SERVICE and LITURGY, as descending from *Moses* by the direction of God, unless that ARK and that SERVICE had come to them from their Ancestors, as authorised by God?

Could the whole People have submitted to pay TITHES, FIRST-FRUITS, &c. upon any feigned revelation? Or,

Could the Tribe of *Levi*, without Divine authority, have submitted, not only to the being originally without a portion in *Israel*, but to the being incapable of any, in hopes of the contributions of the people; which, however large when the whole twelve Tribes served at the same Temple, became very scanty when ten of them withdrew their Allegiance from heaven?

Could ever the * *Book of the LAW*, if consigned to the *Levites*, and promulgated, have been lost, so as to give room for new fictions? Or could a *Book of the LAW* have been forged, if there was none precedent, and put upon the People, as a book that had been delivered to the *Levites* by *Moses*? If no book at all ever was delivered by him to them, what authority could be pretended for such a book?

Had a book been to be forged, in order to be received by the People, could it have contained so many scandalous reflections and accusations against the *People*, and so many fatal threats and predictions concerning them? and, if it had been so framed, would it have been received as authentick?

If the *LAW*, &c. was forged, it must have been before the days of *David*; because by the sacred hymns, in his time, the publication of the *LAW* is celebrated, and the *LAW* was observed: And yet the time between the entry of *Israel* into the *Land*, and the reign of *David*, being but about four hundred years, is too short a space for forgetting the real manner of that Entry, and forging another, to be received by a People, whose genealogy was

* N. B. The *Book of the LAW*, found in the days of *Josias*, was the Copy of the COVENANT in the hand of *Moses*.

was so fixed, and whose time was reckoned by such PERIODS.

If the Book of the LAW was not forged before the reign of David, it could not possibly be forged after, unless the whole history of the kingdom, the tabernacle, the temple, and all the sacred hymns and prophecies, are looked upon as one compleat fiction; because the tabernacle, the temple, the oeconomy of the kingdom, the sacred hymns, and all the other Writings said to be sacred, bear formal relation to the LAW.

But, that all these things were not supposititious, is evident from the anxious zeal that possessed the Jews who returned from the captivity; from their solicitude to restore the city, the temple, and the sacred service; from their strict examination of their genealogies, and scrupulous care to comply with the LAW.

The space between the captivity and the return was so short, that some who saw the first temple, saw also the second, and many who were themselves, or at least whose fathers had been, Officers in the first temple, returned to the service of the second: so that it is utterly impossible that the history, the liturgy, the service of the Jews, preceding the return, should be a fiction, at least that it should be a fiction earlier than the return.

And the story of this nation, from that PERIOD, falls in so much with the history of the rest of the world; their sacred books have been so soon after that translated, and they have been so famous for the tenaciousness of their LAWS, that there is no possibility of suspecting that their LAW and History was forged later than the return.

And, if it is granted that the devotions, the precepts, the institutions, and rites and ceremonies, of this LAW, and the great lines of their History, are not forged; one needs, as to the present consideration, be but little solicitous concerning the accuracy of the Copy of the Books of the LAW, and of the other sacred books; and whether there may not have been some mistakes or interpolations. It is not with one or one hundred words or sentences we have to do; it is with the System of the SA-

CRIFICATURE, and the other religious laws and services of the *Jews*, and with the political establishment of their *Theocratical* government, and the authority for the establishment of both, that we have, at present, concern.

For, if such a system of religious services and ceremonies was revealed and commanded by God; if, for the greater certainty, it was reduced into writing by *Moses*, by divine direction; if such a model of government was framed, as is manifestly calculated for keeping up the observance of those services, and preserving the memory of the institution, and keeping up the authority of the book wherein it is recorded; and if the nation, to whom this institution was delivered, have preserved it accordingly: compleat evidence thence arises to us of the Divinity of the institution; which confirms what has already been deduced from nature, and the history of the world, concerning REVEALED RELIGION; and leads to a demonstrative proof of the truth of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, to which all the emblematical institutions tend, and in which they center.

And, if one can but be once satisfied that this people was chosen and constituted, in a way surprisingly particular, principally for preserving the ORACLES of GOD, the religion revealed by him to men, and the evidence thereof; one shall have little difficulty to believe that they were reasonably exact in this particular:

Especially if he recollects the absolute scrupulosity with which they preserve the *sacred Books*, not having dared, since the days of *Jesus Christ*, though their disputes with the *Christians* gave them the strongest temptation, to alter a letter, or to insert in the text used in their Synagogues those very POINTS which they have contrived to vary the signification of the words, to serve their purposes, though all of them say, and most of them believe, these POINTS to be of divine original.

But the matter does not rest singly upon the presumption of accuracy and fidelity in the *Jews*: We have a translation made, near two hundred years before Christ, into *Greek*; and, by comparing that version with the *Hebrew* kept by the *Jews*, the diversities are not

so many or so material as to make any difference in the sense and tendency of the whole. They may all have flowed from the ignorance or carelessness of interpreters, and from mistakes and accidents incident to Copyers; and, where there is any diversity, it is easy to judge on which side the mistake lies, and the error must naturally be imputed to the Translation, which cannot be presumed to have been handled with so great care and reverence as the Original.

And we have, besides, an *Hebrew* Copy of the *Pentateuch* kept by the *Samaritans*, mortal enemies to the *Jews*, and who would not probably co-operate with them towards any fraud. This Copy, a very few immaterial things excepted, is literally the same with that of the *Jews*; and as the *Pentateuch* contains the very kernel, and the standing proof of that revelation which supports the Christian Religion, it seems to be the direct act of providence for confirming the truth of that important piece of Revelation, that the *Cuthians* succeeded the ten tribes, and that they took up so much of their Religion as had been retained by these tribes, after their defection from the house of *David*, and preserved as sacred the *Pentateuch*, which would have been a check upon the *Jews*, had they falsified theirs; and is a confirmation of the truth, as they have not, out of the mouth of enemies, at least of such as were in no confederacy with them.

And the existence of a Copy of the *Pentateuch* in the hands of the *Samaritans*, who must have had it from the ten tribes, and they again must have retained it from the days of *Jeroboam's* revolt, is a proof, not only that that book, as it now stands, was extant, and the standard of the *Israëlitish* sacred service and faith in the days of *David* and *Solomon*, but also that all the Copies of the *Pentateuch* were not lost, as is foolishly supposed, in the days of *Josiah*; this one being then, clearly, amongst the revolted tribes as the rule of the faith and practice of such of them as had not bowed their knee to *Baal*; besides many thousands that, probably, were in the hands of the *Levites*, and scattered over *Judah* and

Benjamin: so that the Copy of the LAW found in the temple, in the time of *Josiah*, was the Copy of the COVENANT in the hand of *Moses*, as the text asserts, and not the Copy of the *Pentateuch*.

These reflections put the divine authority of the *Jewish* Institution beyond all doubt; they shew it was the indispensable duty of the *Jews* to obey and observe it; and prove demonstrably, that it would be our duty, as well as theirs, to comply with the same institution and observances, unless these shall appear to have been superseded and changed by the same divine authority.

And it is an event that calls loudly for our attention, that this institution, established solemnly by God, has ceased; the temple, chosen for his residence, has been destroyed; and his own peculiar People, whose head and protector he was to have been, and was bound by Covenant to be, have been utterly unpeopled and scattered near 1700 years ago.

To obtain satisfaction on this head, it is fit to recollect, that almost all the *Jewish* religious service consisted in external emblematical acts, rites, and observances, which, in themselves, and but for the institution, and what was intended to be represented by them, served for no good purpose.

The *Hebrew* word translated the LAW, carries not in it, properly, the idea of authority enjoining or commanding, but is taken from a word that signifies, originally, *to demonstrate, to direct, to point out, the way*; and all the *precepts, commands, statutes, ordinances, and appointments*, come promiscuously under that word which we translate LAW.

It must be remembered, that throughout all the sacred *Hebrew* writings, as well in the LAW, as in the HISTORY, HYMNS, and PROPHECIES, many matters concerning the LAW are declared by the Deity, and sentiments expressed which regulate the understanding, end, and meaning of it.

Nothing is more distinct than the several Institutions, the positive and negative Precepts of the LAW, if no more than the outward operation or observance is in
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question; but we find that, throughout the SCRIPTURES, and particularly the book of PSALMS, it was not, singly, the practice of the Precepts, but *the meditation on them day and night*, that was the duty and delight of those that feared God; it was their prayer to be made to understand, to be taught them; it was the duty of the *Priest*, and the *Prince* in a particular manner, and it was the express command of God to *Joshua*, to *meditate in the Law day and night, then should he do wisely*.

It is no wonder that the LAW required meditation to unravel the true end and meaning of it; since, to instance in one particular, the principal Institution of it, to wit SACRIFICE, in itself had no virtue at all, and it was contrary to common sense and reason it should have any.

It is not only contrary to common sense, that sacrifice should have any effect towards removing sin, and placating the Deity: but the same God who instituted sacrifice, tells over and over again the people, to whom he gave that Institution, that he has no pleasure in sacrifice; that the blood of goats cannot atone for sin; that their sacrifices were useless towards the ends for which they imagined them profitable.

What then must the religious *Jews*, who believed that sacrifice was of divine institution, who believed at the same time that it was of no effect towards pardoning sin and procuring favour, and who were bound to meditate on the depths, the hidden things of the Law, conclude? And what must we conclude who believe as they did? Can we conclude otherwise, than that this uncouth, unnatural observance, unprofitable and ineffectual in itself, was appointed to commemorate or point out something, emblematically, that the Deity was desirous to have pointed out and kept in mind?

As one great end of the religious institution, and of the frame of the commonwealth of the *Jews*, was to keep up perpetually the ordinance of SACRIFICATURE; another great end was to preserve, with proper evidence and authority, all the revelations and providences of

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God, recorded by *Moses* and the other inspired Writers.

We know, then, certainly, from the revelation made by God and preserved by the *Jews*,

That God was to be merciful to man ; that he promised *The seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent*, and that *the seed of the serpent should bruise his heel*.

That SACRIFICE was coeval with this revelation, or near it ; *Abel* sacrificed acceptably.

That blood-shed was deemed holy ; and sprinkling that blood the mean, and outward symbol, of making every thing on which it was sprinkled, the Priest, the Altar, the Ark, &c. holy.

That, when God first declared his purpose of selecting *Abraham*, and his family, and made a COVENANT with him to multiply his seed as the stars of heaven, and to give them the land of Canaan, he, at the same time, and with the same breath, declared that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.

That the same declaration was often repeated to *Abraham*, and to his successors *Isaac* and *Jacob* ; which became the foundation of the hopes and expectations of their descendents, made them carefully preserve their genealogies, and greatly value themselves on being of the seed of those men, of whose seed should come THAT wherein all the families of the earth should be blessed.

That the first part of the COVENANT of Promise was, literally, and in a very marvellous manner, fulfilled ; The *Israelites* were miraculously put, and kept in possession of the land of Canaan : But, whilst they staid there, the second part was not performed, nor will they admit that it is to this hour performed.

That though this second part was not performed whilst the Nation remained in possession of the first part of the promise, yet it was perpetually kept in view, and fresh hopes, by repeated promises, given of the same blessing, under very extraordinary descriptions.

The Sceptre was not to depart from *Judah* until *Shiloh* came, and to him was to be the gathering of people.

The Throne was to be established with the seed of *David*

aid for ever; the Covenant was established with him; and of this SEED of his, such marvellous things are spoken, as do not agree to any of his carnal successors, or to any meer man.

This Son of David goes under the name of the Anointed of the Lord, and this anointed one is said to be also the Son of God, the King Anointed on the holy hill of Sion. *I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*

A Virgin was to conceive, and to bring forth a son, whose name was to be Emmanuel. A new thing was to happen in the earth, a woman was to compass a man. *Ier. xxxi. 22.*

To the house of Israel a Child was to be born, to them a son was to be given, the government was to be on his shoulder: and his name was to be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there was to be no end, upon the throne of David, &c. *II. ix. 6. 7.*

A rod was to come forth of the stem of Jesse, which should stand for an ensign to the people, and to which all the Gentiles should seek, whose rest was to be glorious.

Numerous are the promises and predictions of peace and salvation, to come, not only to the Jews, but to all nations, by a mighty CONQUEROR, a great PRINCE, who was to sit on the throne of David; who is called David [i. e. the beloved] in prophecies delivered hundreds of years after king David's death; who was to rule in peace, to lead, and to defend, his people; who is called *The righteousness, The holiness, The salvation of Jehovah, The righteous servant of the Lord, who was to deliver Israel from their sins; who was to be a Light, was to be Salvation to the Gentiles; who was to be given for a covenant to the people; who was to restore peace and joy to Mankind; a fountain was to be opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness.*

The Righteous Servant of the Lord was to suffer for Mankind, for the sins of the people; he was to bear their iniquities;

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quities ; to be bruised for them ; to be unjustly condemned in judgment, and to suffer death ; to make his body an offering for sin : but he was to divide a portion with the great, &c. because he had exposed his body unto death, and he was numbred with the transgressors, and made intercession for the transgressors.

This extraordinary person, who was to do those wondrous things, is described as *sitting on the right hand of God ; as the fellow of God, against whom the sword was to be employed to smite him ; and the people were, at last, to look upon him whom they had pierced ; and to mourn for him as one mourneth for his eldest son* : But this was not to be till the spirit of prayer and supplication should be poured out on the house of David, and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Messiah the anointed one, the Prince, was to be cut off, at a determined period, but not for himself.

And many and various predictions are scattered every where throughout the sacred Writings, that the *Jews* shall be rejected, and the *Gentiles* called to the service of God, and to enjoy the blessings promised to *Israel*.

These several wonderful predictions and promises, with many more of the same kind, could not possibly be overlooked by the *Jews* ; or thought to relate to any thing but the great, the important branch of the original COVENANT with *Abraham*, not performed when the Nation was in possession of the land, to wit, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth were to be blessed*. This was too considerable a part of the Covenant to be overlooked, or to remain unperformed ; and it is no wonder that the *Jews*, from it, and from these several predictions, promises, and declarations, that related to it, expected with confidence *that blessing to all nations in the MESSIAH, who was to be of the seed of David*.

Taking then all these predictions and promises together, and joining them with the original COVENANT made with *Abraham*, it is as clear as the sun's light, that the extraordinary person promised, and described to be the son of David, and the son of God, the anointed one, the beloved, was the seed promised to *Abraham*, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed.

And

And therefore the *Jews*, who believed the *Scripture* to be infallible truth, were insuperably determined to believe this extraordinary person, whom they call the *Messiah*, was to come; and we, who believe the same *Scripture* to be the word of God, must necessarily conclude, that he either is come, or is to come; or else we must admit that God has given his authority to the belief of a falshood, which is monstrously absurd.

The *Jews* may value themselves as much as they please on their being the favourite people, and may flatter themselves in the opinion that the *Messias* was intended peculiarly for them, and that the *Covenant* with *Abraham*, and the whole structure of, and divine providence about, their law and nation, was meant only, and primarily, for them: but we, of the *Nations*, beg leave to differ with them, and to insist, that in the seed of *Abraham* all the *Nations* of the earth, and amongst them we, were to be blessed; that their *Messias* was to be the *Light of the Nations*; that he was given for a *Covenant* to all people; and that he was to bring salvation to all men.

And we must observe, that all that part of the *Covenant* that regarded the land of *Canaan*, and the *Jewish* people in particular, was conditional, forfeitable upon breach of *Covenant* by the *Jews*; and actually forfeited, as they themselves must own, and as their own *Scriptures* testify: whereas the promise of blessing to the *Nations*, in the seed of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, is absolute, and unconditional, and believed necessarily to be performed, whatever came of the *Jewish* law and commonwealth.

The City and Government of the *Jews* is now destroyed, and dissolved; they are unpeopled, as we may say, and remain scattered up and down the face of the earth; their system of religious service is now no more practised, nor practicable; no man can trace his descent from *Aaron*, so no man amongst them can lawfully shed blood; nor can any prove his descent from *David*, so none can know the *Messias* by his pedigree, were he yet to come. It is near 1700 years since the temple, to which

the *Messenger of the Covenant* was to come, is destroyed utterly; and yet the *Jews* will neither admit that the *MESSIAH* is come, nor that their Scripture is false, which is very extraordinary.

It was equally the interest of the *Nations*, as of the *Jews*, to have looked out for the *advent of the MESSIAH*; but they did not know what concern they had in that event, and therefore could not be solicitous about it. The *Jews* were justly solicitous about it, and had all the marks, and tokens, given by infallible Revelation, by which to know it; but, in pursuance of the blindness predicted to themselves, they did not see it.

Is it an amazing providence, that the *Jews*, who looked for the *MESSIAH*, did not see or receive him when he came; and that the *Gentiles*, who knew little, and had no expectation of him, saw and received him, and in him the *blessing*. This is surprising, but it did not happen by chance, it was predicted by *Moses* and the *Prophets*.

Daniel had fixed a determined Time for the Advent of the *MESSIAH*; the whole Nation knew it, and expected him, about the time he came; their expectations ran so high, that the confidence founded upon them, pulled on their ruin, and final destruction. The *MESSIAH* came when they expected him, and yet they knew him so little, that they became his executioners, and put him to death as a blasphemer.

In *Jacob's* blessing to *Judah*, or rather prophecy concerning him, the *Sceptre* was not to depart from *Judah*, nor the *Lawgiver* from between his feet, until *Shiloh* came; and all the *Jews*, by *Shiloh*, understood the *MESSIAH*.

In *Daniel's* Prophecy the advent of the *MESSIAH*, who is to be cut off, is to be followed by the utter destruction of the city, the temple, the law, the commonwealth of the *Jews*.

Though the *Jews* were so blind as not to see the *MESSIAH* when he came, but, instead of receiving him, to cut him off; it is astonishing that, when they had cut him off, when they saw their city, their temple, their commonwealth, and their holy service, at an end, they did

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not see their mistake, and look to him whom they had pierced.

If the Sceptre was not to depart from Judah till Shiloh came, it is a necessary consequence, that, if the Sceptre is actually departed, Shiloh must certainly be come.

At the time predicted, and when the Jews expected the MESSIAH, a man of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, appeared in Judea, preaching repentance, and remission of sins: He declared he was the MESSIAS, the Son of God, sent to save Mankind; and, as an evidence of his mission, wrought in the sight of the people great numbers of amazing miracles; he opened the eyes of the blind, and the ears of the deaf; he restored speech to the dumb, and health to multitudes of sick persons, by his single fiat: He said he came to fulfil, and put an end to, the Law, to die for the sins of mankind: He taught as never man taught. But, being in a form too humble and lowly for the expectations of the Jews, he was arraigned of high treason against the Roman power, and of high treason against the head of the Jewish commonwealth, that is Blasphemy; was tried, convicted upon his own acknowledgment that he was the Son of God, and ignominiously crucified, and buried: And though he did not use his divine power to avoid that death which he said he was to undergo, yet he ever had that power to confirm his own promise that he was to rise again the third day; he rose, instructed the disciples he had elected, and ascended into heaven; having first promised to send the HOLY SPIRIT, the COMFORTER; who was accordingly sent, and filled the Apostles, and Disciples.

As the Jews, that is the High Priest and the Nation, not knowing this Person, put him to death for pretending to be the MESSIAH, it is but natural to think they would for some time persist in their opinion; and therefore they made use of all means to justify their own opinion and conduct, to weaken his credit, to make him pass upon the world for an Impostor, and to oppose the propagation of his doctrine.

As the heathen world was at that time deep sunk in ignorance and superstition, and, where Superstition did not

not prevail, strongly biassed to *Atheism*, the philosophy of *Epicurus*; it was against all probability that the surprising, the self-denying doctrine of *Jesus* should prevail.

Nevertheless, in less than 300 years, in spite of the fierce opposition of the *Jews*; in spite of the many Persecutions from the *Roman Emperors*, who were then Lords of the whole known earth; in spite of the ignorance and weakness of, the first followers of *Christ*, the Apostles, who were chosen of the lowest rank of the people, the doctrine of that crucified *Jesus* so far prevailed, as to become the religion of the whole known world, (the *Jews* excepted): such influence had the teaching of the HOLY SPIRIT, and the Miracles wrought.

If any man shall wantonly think fit to call in question (notwithstanding the evidence) that miracles were wrought, and shall aver that none were performed; let him consider, whether, on that supposition, it is not a miracle, and evidence of Divine power beyond all cavilling, that this doctrine, in the hands of such men, against such opposition, prevailed over mankind in so short a space, without the assistance of any power but the power of God, and the proofs brought from the Scriptures.

The doctrine taught by the followers of *Jesus* was, That he was the *Son of God*, the promised *MESSIAH*; that he came, pursuant to the *COVENANT of GRACE*, to shed his blood for the remission of Sins; that pardon and grace was thereby to be had; that the *LAW* served only to point him out, and describe him; and that the blood of Sacrifices were but emblems, and types, of his blood; who, having therein washed mankind from their sins, was for ever to make intercession for such as believed, and expected mercy.

This doctrine prevailed early over such of the *Jews* as waited humbly for the Salvation of God, and whose notions were not totally debauched; it prevailed over such of the *Gentiles* as retained notions of atonement by blood: but it made no progress among the hardened *Jews*, who crucified their *MESSIAH*, who by all arts whatever, except falsifying the text of their sacred Books,

endeavoured to stifle the new doctrine, and keep their own in countenance; tho' it is highly astonishing it should not have prevailed over them, when their city and temple were rased, and when it became the light of the *Gentile* world.

It is easy, by running over the many typical and prophetical predictions in the *LAW* and the *PROPHETS*, and shewing the harmony and accomplishment in the Person of *Jesus*, to heighten the demonstration of the truth of the Christian Religion, and the amazement at the surprising hardness of the *Jews*; but, postponing that for a little, can any man, from what has been already stated, doubt that the Christian Religion is that pointed out by the *Judaick* dispensation, and that it is Divine, unless he admit that the *Judaick* dispensation is a pure forgery, or that the Deity can fall in fulfilling his Promises?

Or, can any man reflect on the blindness and obstinacy of the *Jews*, in shutting out the light which shone amongst themselves, and which from them only shone out to the rest of the world, without observing the immediate finger of God in this astonishing event which happened, being predicted?

Considering with due attention these circumstances, it is impossible not to perceive skill much greater than human contrivance, as well as power Divine, in preparing and furnishing evidence for the truth of the Christian Religion; or, which is the same thing, the Doctrine of pardon and mercy through the blood of *Christ*.

This doctrine, not resulting from nature or reason, is not capable of proof *a priori*, or from reason; and therefore must depend on evidence external, as other matters of fact do.

Miracles, or the immediate Interposition of Almighty Power controuling the common course of nature, may be proof of revelation; but the proof of those miracles may decay, by length of time, and by degrees, unless some very extraordinary mean is used by the Deity to preserve the proof of such miracles.

Prediction of natural events that do not depend upon a certain, unchanging course of nature, is, when the e-

vent happens, proof that the *Prophet* had his Prediction from heaven.

Prediction of miraculous or supernatural events, when these events happen, is the highest evidence of the intervention of the Deity ; and, if one can be certain that the event was predicted, and accordingly happened, no doubt at all can remain the Prediction and the Event were both from God ; and, supposing such a thing to have happened for the confirmation of any doctrine, the only requisite to perpetuate that proof to posterity would be, to provide such a history of the prediction and accomplishment, as could not, justly, be suspected, or called in question.

The chief causes for denying assent to the truth of facts recorded in history are,

That the Historian may have been ill informed, and may have taken what he wrote without sufficient evidence ;

That the Historian may be single, unsupported by any other collateral Evidence, in which case his veracity may be questioned ; and,

That the History, in length of time, may be vitiated, interpolated, or altered, to be accommodated to prevailing notions or opinions.

Now, if the sacred Institution, and civil Economy, of the seed of *Abraham* is considered, as calculated to receive, to preserve, and to communicate the revelation of the good will of God to man, it furnishes a testimony to that truth superior to all doubt, and to any other evidence that ever supported a matter of fact.

The Historian could not be deceived : the miracles related, were wrought in his and in the sight of the whole people, and many of them not single acts, but reiterated, some repeated for forty years together.

The Historian cannot be looked upon to be single ; (I consider the whole People as joint historians attesting the truth of *Moses's* relation) : what he relates was done in the sight of many hundreds of thousands ; they all agree the relation to be fact ; they receive his account of it, hold it certain and sacred ; observe the precepts ; expect the

the promises; submit to the sanction; and hold their whole land, the possession of each individual, and the offices in the Church and State, by that tenure.

The suspicion of any alteration, or interpolation, to promote any favourite point or opinion, is absolutely excluded; by the religious reverence had, at all times, for the sacred *Book*; by the many reproaches every where to be met with therein against the *Jews*, which their scrupulosity prevented their meddling with; and by the many predictions, not only of those mischiefs to the Nation which happened to them before the sacred *Book* went out of their own hands, and language, into other hands, and languages, but of those mischiefs also which happened some hundreds of years after the Scriptures were published in foreign languages, and continue to happen at this day; I mean, their rejecting the *Messiah*, and putting him to death, the subversion of the state and temple, and their dispersion, blindness, and obstinacy: for I take it to be an event of all others the most surprising, and the least to be accounted for from the nature of things, that the *Jews* should continue, under such circumstances, and in such numbers as they are, firm even to death in the belief of their Scriptures, and the hopes of a *Messiah*, and yet blind and obstinate to madness in rejecting that *Messiah*, whom every one that considers, but they, evidently see, and with joy submit to.

Had the nation of the *Jews* seen in *Jesus* the *Messiah*, and submitted to him, the Scriptures would not have been fulfilled.

Had they, after his death, universally acknowledged him, as many individuals of the nation did, they, as these individuals did, laying aside all national distinctions, would have been sunk and lost in the general mass of Christians; and we should have had no more than an historical account of their having once existed, as we have of the *Athenians*, *Spartans*, *Samnites*, &c.

Had this been the case, the authority of the sacred *Book* would have rested solely on itself; there would not have been one living witness to prove its authentickness, or

to prevent the suspicion that it was forged, as the *Fragments of the book of Enoch, the Testaments of the twelve Patriarchs, the Sibylline Oracles*, and multitudes of other pious cheats, most certainly were.

Or, had the *Jewish Nation* maintained its land, preserved its government, and turned *Christian* with the rest of the world, the books they should then exhibit as sacred, would not be altogether free from suspicion: Those, who combat their truth, as they stand, would not fail to suggest, that passages had been accommodated to the, then, present belief of the Nation, and that the whole might be a forgery, to introduce a belief, which some impostors of that Nation had a mind to set up.

But, as the *Jewish Nation* have ever rejected, and do still continue to reject, with the utmost horror and detestation, the belief of those truths, which their own books are the chief evidence of, they are the most unexceptionable witnesses that the heart or head of the most scrupulous Man could wish for: it being absolutely impossible that they can concur in any fraud or fiction for the support of that doctrine which they utterly abominate.

To reflect a little, then, on the evidence of this *Revelation*: Here is a People chosen, in the womb, as one may say, of their parents, to be, as the Deity is pleased to declare, witnesses for him; formed into a very great and a very peculiar people: distinguished by particular institutions, and by the immediate hand of God kept distinct from all the nations of the Earth: receiving, directly from God, revelations, institutions, predictive and emblematical, and many oracular declarations: preserved by the peculiar providence of God in possession of their land, and in the practice of those prophetic institutions, for above 1500 years: believing that those predictions described an event, which was at hand, big with the greatest blessings to them, and to the whole universe, and looking out hourly for the accomplishment:

But, when that great event happens, this singular people, obstinately blind, refusing to see it, and rejecting the benefit of it; not by accident, but in pursuance of many predictions in their own sacred book: and thereby remaining

maintaining the irreproachable witnesses of the truth of the sacred *Revelation*, which from the beginning they were chosen to bear evidence of.

Nor is their continuing, with that qualification of witnesses, at this day, less marvellous, or less the immediate act of God, than their preservation in their land, before the advent of the *Messiah*, formerly was.

Who can with attention, and without prejudice, view the contrivance, the skill, the interposition of the finger of God, for so many ages, to provide, prepare, and preserve, so surprizing, and so unexceptionable a proof for his revelation of grace to mankind, and at the same time suffer himself to doubt whether all this is not imposture, purely because God has been pleased to reveal some things that do not conform so well to his apprehensions; tho' he knows full well that his understanding is, almost in every thing, scanty and weak?

Who can doubt that, if God intended to reveal peace and mercy to mankind, he would make the evidence of that revelation strong and permanent?

And who can see the evidence, and believe, without adoring, and determining to serve that beneficent Being, who has provided such evidence of his grace, for the comfort, direction, and encouragement of mankind, to pursue their duty, and to arrive at felicity?

Early we saw man undone, unless there was some hidden method in reserve with the Deity for abolishing his sin; and in a desperate state, if hope was not created, by revealing that method, which to man must naturally be unknown.

We saw, also, that mankind had hopes from the earliest times; that these hopes had in them some connection with the shedding of blood; and, from the universality of the hope of pardon on that principle, we concluded it highly probable that these hopes were given, and that mean pointed out by the Deity; both the one and the other being not only without any countenance from, but even, as some men have seemed to understand them, contrary to reason.

We saw, that, if these hopes, and the mean used,

were from God, there must be some standing evidence provided by the Deity, for producing in man belief in his mercy, and the just consequences of that belief.

And, now, we see, in fact, that such evidence is provided; which justifies the hopes and the practice of the ancient world, at the same time that it receives confirmation from them; and shews clearly that this REVELATION was given from the beginning, and that *the Law of Moses* is a REPUBLICATION of it.

This then being, undeniably, the case, how absurd and pernicious must the sentiments and conduct be of these unlearned, but conceited men, who, without examining nature or revelation carefully, presume to decide magisterially against REVEALED RELIGION; and employ all the talents the bountiful God of Nature has bestowed upon them, not to examine and enquire into, but to discredit and defeat the evidence that he has, with such infinite care, provided; and thereby harden themselves, and all such whose hearts and heads are turned like theirs, in false and impious notions?

Tindal (and all who have thought, before or after him, as he does) will have *the law of NATURE*, that is, *the light of NATURE*, a perfect rule for mens actions; and who doubts this? He says this light is absolutely sufficient to guide men in their conduct towards God, and towards one another; and this is no doubt also true. But, then, he concludes that this *light of NATURE* is, by itself, sufficient in our present state to lead us comfortably through this life to happiness in the next: but here he errs, manifestly, either from want of attention to truths which he admits, or from building on false principles, which, without due examination, he has adopted.

That *the light of NATURE*, with the instructions the first man had, was sufficient to guide him before he sinned, is certain; and that the same light, after committing that sin, was a sufficient monitor against committing more, may also be true: But how was this first Man to find out, that the first sin he committed was to be pardoned, if that God against whom he sinned, had not told

old him so much: Is there any thing in NATURE to let a man know, certainly, that the infinite, the perfect, the immutable justice of God will pardon, connive, or wink at sin, the transgression of the eternal law of order; in setting up another sovereign, without some cause, motive or consideration, of infinite moment, to determine the Deity so to do? Or can NATURE find out, that there was truly the interposition of such a cause?

Mr. Tindal would avoid this difficulty, by supposing that the *light of NATURE* teaches man that God is merciful, and that he will pardon, upon repentance, and a purpose of amendment: and, if this was true, his argument would go pretty far. But this is most certainly not true: the *Deist* borrows, in this, an article from REVEALED RELIGION, which, by ascribing to the *light of NATURE*, he would make use of to overthrow that very Religion that discovered it.

The *light of NATURE* shows the God of nature to be bountiful, good, benign, clement, beneficent and merciful, if the Idea is carried no farther than a disposition not to hurt, and to relieve proper objects of relief; but the *light of NATURE* does in no way shew that this perfect Being is merciful to sinners, or that his clemency or beneficence can have for its object the offender against immutable justice. The ideas of indignation against sin, and punishment of trespass, are so necessarily joined with, and inseparable from the idea of infinite, perfect justice, that the *light of NATURE*, without destroying the idea of the essential justice of God, or without discovering what, without REVELATION, it could not discover, that justice was, by the interposition of an atonement of infinite consideration, to be satisfied, could not possibly frame to itself any notion that mercy was to take place, or that repentance, and purpose of amendment, were to be of any moment.

REVELATION, indeed, has altered the case; it has described God as merciful, long-suffering, patient, and pardoning transgression, upon repentance: But, then, it has reconciled that discovery to the dictates of nature, which spoke just the reverse, by intimating that an at-

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onement has, by infinite mercy, been found out to satisfy immutable, essential justice.

Thus do weak, presumptuous men mislead themselves, to lull their conscience, that glimpse of the light of nature, asleep; and, to prevent the trouble it must give them, they lay hold of a principle discovered, and proved, only, by REVELATION; but, because they would not be beholden to REVELATION for it, they boldly, and falsely, aver it is deducible from REASON; and then make use of it to support an *Hypothesis*, of their own framing, that shall overturn that REVELATION, from which the support to their *Hypothesis* is sought.

DEISM is not tenible without supposing remission of sin to be necessarily consequent upon repentance, and this to be discoverable by the *light of NATURE*. Remission does not appear from NATURE to be the consequence of repentance, but rather the contrary; the discovery and proof of this proposition is owing solely to REVELATION; and yet there are men, who would be thought wise and honest, who would be thought to believe the proposition, and yet make it the study of their lives to overthrow the evidence on which it is built.

It would be very happy if these *Gentlemen*, who pique themselves so much on the study, the knowledge, the *light of NATURE*, entered a little more into the consideration of themselves, and of those things they so much pretend to know, and to admire; and bestowed but half the time they take to direct others, in finding out their own condition, and what they have to hope or fear. Did they but look at their own case, they should be less wanton, less presumptuous.

What man is there, who, entering into himself, and comparing honestly what he now is with what man originally was, and ought to have continued, does not see the corruption, the misery, the helplessness of his own condition? If the depravity or violence of his appetites, his lusts, or his passions, have drawn him to commit any of the more notorious crimes that disturb society, or destroy his neighbour, conscience generally interposes, and the sting is felt, till the depraved wretch harden himself by
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some false excuse, or, by some other criminal pursuit, draw away his attention from the *fore*.

But, supposing a man, from the happy constitution with which he was born, from the advantage of a good education to form his sentiments, or from the kind conduct of God's providence, free from those grosser offences that fall under the censure and distaste of all honest men: can he recollect, that he is the creature of the infinitely perfect Being; that the great, the chief end of giving him all those intellectual faculties that distinguish him from the rest of the creation, was to contemplate the power, the wisdom, the goodness of God, in his works and in his providence, and to admire, adore, and serve this source of goodness, power, wisdom, and perfection; that his distinguishing felicity lay in pursuing his duty, in answering the ends for which those intellectual faculties were given; that a tribute of praise, of acknowledgment, and of thankfulness, is due to the God of nature, who has mercifully and beneficently framed the heart of man, so that the very act of paying this tribute is necessarily attended with the most perfect, pure joy, serenity and satisfaction, that the human mind is capable of feeling: I say, can he recollect these things, and at the same time be conscious that he seldom, if ever, employs the talents given him to the end for which they were given; that it is not the occupation of his mind, or the joy of his heart, to contemplate or acknowledge the divine wisdom, and goodness; that the supreme good is not only not the object of the meditation of his mind, or of the pursuit of his heart, but that these faculties, and dispositions, bountifully given for those honourable and blessed ends, are monstrously misapplied to the pursuit of fleeting, perishing, if not wicked, pleasures; that the soul is so knit to, and bewitched with, those mean, unmanly, unreasonab!e enjoyments, which end in smoke, if not in sorrow, that there is no taste left for those sublime, permanent pleasures, for which it was created; and that, in place of using the very refuse of one's time, what is over and above the pursuit and enjoyment of those vain comforts, to the chief end for which time was indulged, the thought of the least com-

communication with the Creator is so painful, that all amusements, how foolish or insignificant soever, are anxiously sought after, to murder time, and to divert, as 'tis called, from that exercise of the soul, and heart, wherein consists his indispensable duty, and his highest felicity; without perceiving that he is guilty of high-treason against the God of NATURE; that he is revolted from him, and has substituted in his place, and made choice of, his creatures for the object of his desires, and of his pursuits; that they are become his masters, who hold him in captivity; and he their slave, so chained to their drudgery, that he has no more capacity left to return to the enjoyment of his Maker, and to relish the pleasures that are with him for evermore; without dreading the just vengeance of the Omnipotent, which may reach him here, and must reach him, unless reconciliation intervene, in the life to come; whither, he knows, the pleasures and the amusements of this life cannot follow him?

Whoever makes these reflections, and every living soul must, who will enter into himself, and think seriously, can have no other question to exercise his mind with, but, What shall he do to be saved? And if any accident should bring to his ears that blessed piece of intelligence, that there is a way still open to the favour of God, and means provided for the pardon of sin, it is impossible the tidings should not rouse the whole of his Attention, and employ the utmost of his diligence to discover the truth of so acceptable news; which, if found to be the very will and revelation of God, must meet with the most joyful and thankful acceptance.

But, if men will not look so far into themselves, as to see and feel their miserable condition; if they are so well contented with the pleasure they enjoy, or have in view, that they look for none other; or if their immersion in sensual satisfactions prevents their entertaining those honourable notions of the Deity, and of his service, that are contradictory to their present pursuits and scheme of life; it is no wonder they should not listen with attention to a piece of information, which, if true, breaks in upon their present happiness, sours all their pleasures, and promises,

in exchange, an enjoyment for which they have no taste.

Men, so minded, cannot possibly receive the GOSPEL, or fail to forge reasons against it; whilst those who sensibly feel the want, must with the greatest earnestness wish they may, upon due examination, find it true.

The GOSPEL is an infallible CURE, a glorious MEDICINE, though of a bitter relish to many palates, for the most obstinate, the most dangerous disease: A MEDICINE coveted, however, notwithstanding its harshness, and greedily swallowed by those who feel the anguish of the disease, or dread the danger; but nauseated and rejected by those who are sensible of no ailment, and believe themselves to be in health. It is one of the hardest things in the world, to persuade *Madmen* to come under the regimen necessary for their cure, because it is impossible to convince them they are *mad*: a madman, however, can by violence be compelled to the taking of medicine; but the GOSPEL must be sought after, and taken voluntarily, and wishfully, before it can do any good.

The whole want no PHYSICIAN, and those who think themselves so, believe they want none: It is otherwise with the sick; who, in proportion as they feel agony, are impatient, and earnest for relief.

They begin at the wrong end, who, to persuade a DEIST to receive the GOSPEL, attempt first to prove the excellence and infallibility of it: If he is satisfied, he has no occasion for it, he cannot be brought to examine sufficiently, and to weigh the proof. Convince a man, who dislikes the only medicine that can cure him, that he is dangerously ill, he will hear you patiently on the subject of the remedy, and submit to make use of it, be it ever so unpalatable; if you cannot convince him that he stands in need of it, he is *incurable*.

As some men are so thoroughly corrupted, as to like the wretched state in which they are, better than that, in the possession whereof the highest felicity their nature is capable of consists; they are so weak, and at the same time so conceited, as to think they can persuade others, who do feel this misery, and pant after relief, that they are in perfect health, and want no remedy; and, by doing

ing so, expose themselves to the pity, if not to the indignation, of those who are conscious of their own misery, and with joy hope for relief from means that these men endeavour to traduce, and abuse.

The whole of the DEIST's scheme is, as he imagines, built upon REASON; and, so far as right reason goes, the CHRISTIAN agrees with him: but the difference between them is this, The DEIST maintains, that nothing is to be admitted but what he can assign a proper reason for, or, in other words, what falls in with the ideas which he has, or has made for himself: whereas the humble CHRISTIAN believes that there are things of which he neither has, nor can have, adequate ideas; that things may be true, though he does not justly know how, or why, they are so; and that, for the reality and truth of such things as do not depend upon reason, or fall within his knowledge, he must depend upon such evidence as is sufficient to induce the belief of any matter of fact.

When one considers how little we know of matter, which we see, feel, and taste, and on which we have tried so many thousand EXPERIMENTS; how undeniably every system, forged by the wit and industry of the greatest GENIUSES, and believed for some time, has been overthrown by succeeding EXPERIMENTS; what amazing, nay seemingly contradictory effects the CHYMIST every day sees produced in his *Laboratory*, by very simple mixtures; and how certain we are, that hitherto we, from our reason, have discovered nothing of the *first principles of MOTION*, and *that MECHANISM* which supports our selves and this system: when one recollects, that we know nothing at all of the nature of our own soul, and are incapable of framing any idea of it, or of any other spirit; and when one reflects how infinitely above our comprehension the Deity must be: it is impossible not to be astonished at the presumptuous folly of those men who would set up their knowledge for the standard, and test, of every thing, divine and human; who by it would define the nature, and manner of existence, of the incomprehensible Deity; who by it would determine and regulate His views, His designs, His actions; and
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who by it take upon them to judge of the wisdom and justice of His designs and actions, contrary to what He has declared about them; though it is demonstratively certain, that they cannot be sure they know the causes of, or motives to those designs or actions.

Ridiculous as this fond conceit of the sufficiency of REASON and human KNOWLEDGE is, INFIDELITY finds in it one of its chief supports. Many facts are related, many things are *revealed*, that do not quadrate with the notions men have framed to themselves, which they call knowledge. Each of these creates an objection, which the objector, taking to be unanswerable, does not give himself the trouble to look for an answer to; and the same weight is laid upon the point's being inconsistent with his notions, or not accountable for by his knowledge, as if it was a manifest contradiction to right reason: though every one must see the difference between a contradiction *in terms*, an absolute inconsistency in the thing itself, and an inconsistency between a thing, and the notions a man has framed on that subject, or even the incapacity of framing a distinct notion of the thing itself.

Vanity, selfishness, an affectation of gaining more knowledge than the Creator thought fit to allow, was the cause of the ruin of our first parents; and a false, presumptuous opinion, of the sufficiency and extent of the knowledge their descendents are possessed of, is the cause of their continuing in misery to this day: Preferring knowledge, in expectation, to the favour of God, undid the first rational creatures; setting up the OPINION of knowledge against the *revoked* WILL of God, fastens the calamity upon their unhappy children.

It is however surprising, that men, who are so fond of, and lay so much stress on knowledge, are not more careful to lay up a sufficient stock of it. A late noted writer against Christianity gave himself the trouble to pick up so much *Hebrew* learning, as was, in his opinion, sufficient to call in question the application of a few particular passages of the *Old Testament* to the MESSIAH, and seemed to think that his labours had overthrown the whole evidence that arises from the *Old Testament* to sup-

port the *New*; without knowing what a little more learning, and unbiaſſed attention, would have ſhewed him; that the evidence does not depend on a few texts; that the whole ſyſtem of the *Jewiſh* institution, every rite, ceremony, and ſacrifice, was predictive; and that the chief ſcope of all the *hymns*, and *prophecies*, was to explain and apply thoſe predictions.

To frame a true notion of any thing, one muſt conſider it all together, and examine all the parts of it; a juſt idea can never be got of any object by viewing only ſcraps of it, and conſidering it by halves.

So fares it with revelation, and the evidence of it. No man who has conſidered the whole with due care, and has thereby framed a true idea of it, ever did, or ever will reject it; whereas he who will frame an opinion from a partial conſideration only, can hardly fail to make a miſtake.

It has been taken notice of, as an objection of vaſt conſequence, againſt the evidence drawn from the *Old Teſtament* to ſupport the *New*, that all the promiſes and threats, to enforce obedience to the *LAW*, are every one *temporal*, relating to the goods and evils of this life, to the enjoyment or forfeiture of the land of *Canaan*, to proſperity or adverſity in this world, without the leaſt mixture of any conſideration that relates to the life to come; and thence it has been concluded, that the *Jews* had no expectation given them of future happineſs; that the *Sadducees*, who denied the reſurrection, found nothing to contradict them in their ſacred Books; and that a religion, ſo framed, could not be intended to introduce or lead to the *CHRISTIAN*.

The obſervation which gives riſe to the objection, is undoubtedly true: the end of the whole of the *Jewiſh* institution, ſacred and civil, was, ſufficiently to reveal, and preſerve to future generations ſufficient evidence of that *REVELATION*. The way choſen by the Deity to preſerve the evidence was, to ſelect a particular people; to make them all witneſſes of the miracles that demonſtrate the certainty of the revelation; to eſtabliſh among them ſuch obſervances, throughout all their generations, as ſhould commemorate and predict; to reduce his Will
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into writing, for the greater certainty ; to give them the keeping of that writing ; to lay before them the strongest motives, that, as a people or nation, they were capable of ; to keep up unviolated these observances, and to preserve untouched his written will ; to promise to give, and to keep them in possession of the land of *Canaan*, a land flowing with milk and honey ; to engage to reside amongst them, and to direct and protect them from all harm, and to favour them with all national blessings ; and to threaten them with all national ills if they failed in keeping his *LAW*, that is, preserving the evidence of his *REVELATION*.

And, to make those motives the stronger, we see that the Deity was pleased to enter into a formal covenant with the whole people, as a *PEOPLE*, which bound him to the performance of all these articles ; upon condition, however, that the people performed, on their part ; and bound the people, absolutely, to the keeping and observance of his *LAW*, with a formal submission to the threatnings and denunciations of ruin and destruction, if they failed in the performance of their part, to which they explicitly consented, by pronouncing the curses against themselves if they disobeyed.

And, in fact, we observe that God performed, literally, his part of this agreement : With mighty power he introduced, and maintained, this people in possession of the promised land ; he resided in the midst of them ; he cherished them when they kept his *LAW* ; and chastised them when they were remiss in his service : when their rulers, their princes, and nobles, sought after other gods, and slighted his service, the *NATION*, as such, was delivered to slavery ; when they returned in their hearts to their duty, they were restored to their land, and became again a *NATION* : but when they nationally corrupted themselves, forgot the end of the *LAW*, framed to themselves unworthy notions about their God, his *REVELATION*, and *SALVATION*, which by the whole law was predicted, and carried their perverse imaginations so high, as to put to death, as a malefactor, the *DELIVERER* of mankind ; then God executed the threats,

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to which the people by covenant had agreed; he *dispersed*, and *blinded* them; and, by preserving them still under that **DISPERSION** and **BLINDNESS**, preserves the evidence of the **REVELATION** as strongly and clearly, as it was preserved by them whilst a **NATION**, in possession of the promised land.

The **COVENANT**, then, with the people, was literal; all the promises annexed to the performance, on their part, were literal, and literally performed; the end the Deity had in making that **COVENANT** is obvious, and has manifestly been attained: but will it from thence follow, that the **LAW** itself, with all the *emblematical* rites, ceremonies, and institutions, had no higher meaning, did not speak a language very intelligible to every individual *Jew*, who had a soul to be saved, and who, from those divine institutions, was to discover the will of God, and conceive hopes of mercy and forgiveness; or that the *observing* and *meditating* on this **LAW**, so often recommended to every individual, was not necessarily to lead them to the knowledge of God, and to the expectation of his favour, in a future state?

To satisfy one's self about this, no more is necessary than to look into the history, and the other sacred writings of the *Jews*; where the religious sentiments of inspired men, the declarations of the Deity, the professions, prayers, and confessions of the church, sufficiently shew what each individual was to see and believe, and what the wise and the devout did believe: Comparing the law with these things, one has a **KEY** to decypher the *typical* institutions, and a certain explication of all that it be-
lieves us to know of the *Mosaic* institution; and it will evidently appear, that the *Mosaic* institution, which is no more than a **REPUBLICATION** of the **REVELATION** and institutions originally given to *Adam*, together with the accounts he gives of things, contain a full discovery of all that **MAN** was to know, and to believe, concerning God, and himself, that was not discoverable by the *light of nature*, so much prized, and idolized, *of late*.

If one, from the Reflections already made, is satisfied that the **LAW** of *Moses* is from God, and that the *Jewish*

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SCRIPTURES contain the REVELATION of the Will of the Deity, recorded and preserved with such industry and evidence, not for the sake of the *Jews*, but for the sake of all mankind, he must look upon them as an inestimable treasure, stored with important truth; and cannot think any pains, bestowed in perusing and understanding them, lost; or any thing from them discovered, to be trivial or doubtful.

A CYPHER is, in itself, obscure; make use of the KEY, it becomes intelligible; and, if by so doing it becomes clear and intelligible, you are certain you have the right KEY.

The *scriptural* rites, institutions, and ceremonies, are *emblematical*, and therefore, in some degree, obscure; find out but a KEY to explain the meaning of those EMBLEMS, that shall make all sense, and truth, and you are sure your KEY is a true one.

The ancients recorded their sentiments, their actions, *hieroglyphically*, that is *emblematically*, by figures of things animate or inanimate, expressive of their meaning; the KEY to, or DICTIONARY, if one may so term it, of those EMBLEMS, is now lost; and, if it could be recovered, would certainly explain those *Egyptian* antiquities still preserved. To us that sort of writing is obscure, but it was not so to the *Egyptians* who made use of it: and it can with as little reason be imagined, that the *emblematical* religious service, instituted by God, was obscure, or not perfectly understood by those who were commanded to observe it, and for whose comfort and instruction it was established; on the contrary, it could not answer the end, if it was not plain and intelligible.

It has been already observed, that all men are not alike sagacious, and consequently not alike qualified for discovering, and knowing, their misfortune, their duty, their felicity; and that the REVELATION of the will of God, to be perfect, must be such as should accommodate itself to all, and tend to lead all to their duty; a consequence whereof it is, that MEMORIALS should be established, even of things discoverable by the light of Nature by

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by the *penetrating*, for the use of the less clear-sighted, if reflection on those things was to be of universal use.

The *SCRIPTURES* are the most ancient of all writings extant; the language in which they are wrote, is now no more, and has not for 2000 years been in common use; and there is not a line of that language now in being, but what is contained in the sacred Books.

Without the assistance of the *Greek* translation, and some other paraphrases, and helps from later languages, the *Hebrew* Scriptures, though in our hands, would be altogether useless to us.

And therefore we must reverence the divine providence, that made the *Babylonish* Captivity, and the Dispersion that followed upon it, which drove multitudes of the *Jews* into foreign countries, where they forgot their own, and learned the prevailing, the *Greek* language, the instrument or occasion of procuring that translation, by which we can certainly *decypher* the *Hebrew*, and come at the perfect knowledge of almost all the *SCRIPTURE*, at least of so much of it as is necessary for the great *END* God had in view, the evidence of the truth of the *REVELATION* of his will to mankind.

As no other book comes near to the *SCRIPTURE*, in point of antiquity, it is a disadvantage to us that we do not precisely know, further than we can collect from the *sacred Books*, the customs, the manners, the sentiments, and common notions, that prevailed amongst men, at the date of the several transactions related; and are therefore at a loss to conceive, and distinctly to account for, the reason and meaning of several phrases, directions, and observances, whilst the ancients, to whom those things were said or delivered, well knew what they meant, and for what end they were recorded. But though we do not know exactly why the thing was so phrased, or cannot tell, precisely, the immediate origin of the particular institution; yet, by comparing of texts, we can see evidently the general sense of the phrase, and collect the end of the *INSTITUTION*, so far as the knowledge of the one or the other is necessary to the great design of God; and therefore ought rather, with thankfulness, to acknowledge

ledge the goodness of God, who, through the midst of so many difficulties, has preserved to us all necessary knowledge, than repine at the loss of that which would tend chiefly to gratify curiosity.

The highest act of religious service in the Jewish church, and amongst all mankind, was SACRIFICE, which, though in observance as early as *Adam*, was nevertheless re-established by *Moses*, with many particular positive injunctions, and many negative precepts; correcting abuses that had crept into that INSTITUTION, from the false notions of men.

It was common to all sorts of SACRIFICE, that the BLOOD of the animal was spilt, and deemed of very high efficacy; and the whole body, or some part of it, that which was the most inflameable, the fat, and the inwards, was burnt with fire on the altar.

This BLOOD is directed, carefully, and very early, to be abstained from; it is said to be the life of the animal; it is represented as what by the touch polluteth; and at the same time it is represented as the most sovereign Purifier: by it the altar, the ark, the *Sanctum sanctorum*, the tabernacle, the priest, were sanctified, were cleansed, were hallowed.

The BURNT-OFFERING is properly termed *Ascension*, from the parts of it ascending in smoke by fire; the BLOOD is said to atone, and the SMOKE to be of a sweet savour, or a savour of rest to the Lord.

The party who offered, was to lay his hands upon the head of the *Victim* sacrificed for sin, when it was to be killed.

And the very intent of the SIN-OFFERING was, to atone for the sin a man came to the knowledge of, and confessed.

The Deity, considered as the punisher of sin, and as in a state of anger and wrath against the guilty, is always represented under the image of *Fire*, a consuming, devouring *Fire*.

If God, then, to commemorate his declaration of mercy and pardon to mankind, and to preserve and encourage their hopes, through the intercession of a Saviour, who

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who was to be slain and bruised for their sins, was pleased to direct, that an innocent animal, to represent the great *Intercessor*, should be slain, and that for the sins of him who brought it to the altar; that the *Blood* of it should be *shed*, and *sprinkled* upon the altar, and *poured out* at the foot thereof; that the carcass, or at least the fat, the covering of the inwards, the most inflameable part of it, should be committed to the sacred fire, the emblem of the wrath of the Deity against him; and, being consumed, thereby should ascend towards the heavens in *smoke*, which *smoke* is represented as of a sweet savour, or savour of rest to *Jehovah*; and if man was told that this commemoration of the promised salvation was to atone for sin, and procure favour: how could there be any doubt in his mind, that the *Victim* was only *typical*; that the virtue was really in the *thing typified*; that the *Blood* that sanctified every thing, and atoned for sin, was not the blood of the *Victim*; and that the *Smoke*, ascending from the sacrifice consumed by fire, was *emblematical* only of something else that was to ascend, from the *typified Victim*, to propitiate, and reconcile God to the sinner.

It cannot, with reason, be doubted that the merciful God, who instituted SACRIFICE for the comfort and instruction of mankind, communicated to him the *end* and meaning of the several appointments; and, being once discovered, the EMBLEMS are in themselves so expressive, and the taking them in the literal sense so absurd, that it is no small proof of the corruption of human nature, and the strength of giddy IMAGINATION, that they ever came to be mistaken, or misapplied.

In SACRIFICE, which was daily to be repeated as the highest act of devotion, man had the strongest *Memorandum* of his FALL; of the forfeiture thereby; of that life for which the BLOOD, the LIFE, of the VICTIM was to be shed; of the anger of God which must have consumed him, if what was represented by the BURNT-OFFERING had not interposed; and of the excellency of the SACRIFICE typified, by whose oblation the Deity was placated and reconciled. Reflections on this SYMBOLICAL act, and what clearly was intended by it, must
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put the mind in the most proper disposition for acknowledging, praying, and praising.

And, therefore, besides the daily, the weekly, the monthly, the yearly sacrifices, at stated times, it pleased the Deity to direct the iteration of the same SYMBOLICAL act, whenever man, moved by reverence to the Deity, was desirous to approach the place he chose for his service, in order to pray, to praise, or to rejoice, in his mercy, or favour. His peace-offerings were to be offered with gladness; and, after the blood was shed, and the FAT burnt upon the altar, the party who made the offering was to feast on the remainder with joy, in confidence of the favour of the Deity.

Nay, the perpetual obligation to abstain from BLOOD, and the FAT of animals, slain even for private use, was a constant *Memorandum*, to such as could not attend the publick service, of their forfeiture, and of their restoration.

And the necessary oblation of the FIRST-FRUITS, and of samples of what the earth yields for our support, in the regular meat and drink offerings, were so many memorials of what was to be with, or in the great SACRIFICE, that it is surprizing the meaning should have been so much mistaken as, in time, it came to be.

That the same INSTITUTION, not dependent on the publication of the LAW by *Moses*, reached all nations, is evident from the ancient and universal practice of all nations, with whom SACRIFICATURE was the highest act of devotion, thought sufficient to expiate sin, and to procure favour, and even fellowship with God.

The ancients of all nations shed BLOOD, and believed the virtue of it to be wonderful, witness their TAUROBOLIA, and their CRIOBOLIA; burnt the FAT, and sometimes the whole VICTIM, on altars, with fire, and believed the smell grateful to the Deity; they offered FIRST-FRUITS; they poured out LIBATIONS; they burnt samples of the grain the earth afforded them; the SALT of the COVENANT was not wanting; they vowed SACRIFICE, and returned thanks by SACRIFICE; and in their PEACE-OFFERINGS they feasted before their God
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on part of the victim, and rejoiced in his favour, and protection.

'Tis true, the greatest part of them, suffering their IMAGINATIONS to mislead them, forgot the express prohibition not to eat BLOOD; but still they retained the highest opinion of its efficacy. If they ate the BLOOD of sacrifice, it was to render them more perfect, and more acceptable; and if, instead of sprinkling the altar, they besmeared their own bodies with BLOOD, they gave thereby the stronger evidence of the merit and virtue they imagined was in the blood they made that use of.

Besides the VICTIM, another main ingredient in SACRIFICATURE was the PRIEST, the Person directed by God to approach his altar, and to make the oblation and atonement, in the name of *Jehovah*, for the party offering.

The PRIESTHOOD, originally, resided with the *first-born*; with whom also, amongst the ancient heathens, resided the ROYALTY.

In *Israel* God exchanged, formally, the *first-born* for the *Levites*, and took the *Levites*, in their room, for the service of the tabernacle.

Of the house of *Levi*, *Aaron*, the *first-born*, was to be *Higb-Priest*, his sons were to serve under him in SACRIFICATURE, and the bulk of the *Levites* were for inferior service only.

This *Higb-Priest* was to be perfect; he was to be consecrated with BLOOD, and anointed with OIL; he was to be pure from all spot; he was, whilst officiating, to be clothed with holy garments, all of linen; he had precious, and very particular, robes and ornaments appointed for him. In the *Breast-plate of Judgment* he was to carry URIM and THUMMIM, LIGHT and PERFECTION, by which God gave responses; on his heart, and on his shoulders, were the names of all the tribes of the people engraved on a plate of pure gold, to be constantly, whilst officiating, worn; on his fore-head was the inscription HOLY, or HOLINESS, to *Jehovah*. The Plate, with this inscription, was said to be upon his fore-head, the

he might bear the iniquities of the holy things, which the children of *Israel* should hallow, in all their gifts, and that they might be accepted. This *Priest* was to sprinkle the BLOOD; was to offer the BURNT-OFFERING; was to make atonement for sin, and reconcile; was to enter, with BLOOD, once a-year within the VAIL, into the SANCTUM SANCTORUM, the EMBLEM of the residence of the invifible God; was to sprinkle BLOOD upon the MERCY-SEAT; and was, when he came out, solemnly to blefs the people.

Nothing can be more absurd than to fuppofe that *Aaron* was HOLINESS to *Jehovah*; that he was clean, and innocent; that he had in him light and perfection; that he fupported the whole people of *Israel*; that he could effectually atone for, and intercede with God, for the people; or that he could enter into the real prefence of *Jehovah*, and from thence bring a bleffing to the people: and confequently, nothing is plainer, than that, in all thefe particulars, *Aaron* was no more than a *Representative*.

If *Aaron* was to represent a *Perfon* pure and innocent, full of light and perfection, the holy one of *Jehovah*, who was to fupport, and have for ever on his heart, the people of God; who was to offer blood, effectual, for cleansing them from their fins; was thereby to atone, and make continual interceffion for them; was to enter into the immediate prefence of God, to propitiate for the people, and from thence to blefs them: how could he do this otherwife than by washing his body with WATER, as the EMBLEM of purity; by putting on white linen GARMENTS, as the EMBLEM of INNOCENCE; by carrying URIM and THUMMIM, i. e. *Light* and *Perfection*, fomething by which the Deity manifested itfelf, about with him; by having the infcription of the holy name of *Jehovah* faftened to his fore-head; by having the names of the tribes of *Israel* on his heart, and on his foulders; by fprinkling the BLOOD for atonement; and offering the BURNT-SACRIFICE, that yielded a favour of reft; and by entering in folemnity into the HOLY of HOLIES, the EMBLEM of the residence of the in-

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invisible God, there again to sprinkle BLOOD, and from thence, formally, to *bless* the people?

In the merciful act of the *Son of God* for the salvation of mankind, there are two parts; the PASSIVE, if one may so speak, and the ACTIVE; the VICTIM bleeding and burnt represents the PASSIVE part: but then the great SACRIFICE was not compelled to suffer by the act of any one; the sinner did not offer it; the SACRIFICE voluntarily offered itself, by doing so, atoned, and continues ACTIVE in making intercession perpetually*.

The VICTIM bleeding, then, points out this PASSIVE part of the satisfaction; but the ACTIVE part, that which claims, so necessarily, the acknowledgment, and adoration, of mankind, to that *beneficent, blessed Being*, that offered the atonement, and makes intercession, would not have been pointed out in this emblematical act, unless some *thing*, or *person*, to represent him, acting in that capacity, had been fixed upon; *something* adorned with the highest SYMBOLS of purity, sanctity, and perfection, offering and interceding for mankind; and who can fail to see these characters in the *High-Priest*?

And therefore, as has been observed in the case of the VICTIM, no one, who believes the INSTITUTION divine, can doubt that the *end* and meaning of each particular was explained, when the observance was first appointed.

And whoever admits this, must also see that the original REVELATION was very clear, circumstantiate, and distinct; and that the MEMORIALS instituted for preserving the knowledge, then *revealed*, and maintaining the impression of it on the spirits of men, were very expressive and significative, and with great accuracy adjusted to the ways of thinking of those who recorded every thing intended to be known, by EMBLEMS, and SYMBOLICAL representations; however some of the particulars may not be now clear to us, who know not the proper meaning of some of their SYMBOLS.

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* N. B. *Amongst the heathen, when a VICTIM seemed reluctant, that was deemed a bad OMEN.*

The assumption of the *Levites* in place of the *first-born*, is, visibly, no older than *Moses*; but it seems very clear the *first-born* were, before that institution, in some sense, what *Aaron* wore on the plate of the mitre, HOLY, or HOLINESS, to *Jehovah*; and were all, as representatives of the great INTERCESSOR, entitled to shed BLOOD, and exercise the *Priestly* office, till the change was made, for very wise and just reasons.

No more is recorded of the first promise, than that *The seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent*: So that it does not appear, from this text; to have been originally declared that the SAVIOUR was to proceed from a VIRGIN.

And, if that had been declared, it would have been difficult to have found out any *Representation* fit to express, and keep up the memory of it.

Besides, that the expectation of being the mother of that Saviour might have, with *believing* women, prevented marriage; as the same hopes promoted it among the *Israelites*, who looked for that seed, in the ordinary way; nay prompted some women to unlawful actions with men of the *Line*, who they supposed had the promise of the Seed, as *Lot's* daughters, *Tamar*, the *Midianitish* woman, *Bathsheba*, &c.

But we find the expectation of the promised Seed was confined to the *first-born*, that which opened the womb.

Primogeniture was reckoned after the mother; the *first-born* of a second wife was intitled to the rights attending it, in prejudice of the second son of a first wife, though born, in point of time, ever so long before him. Vid. 1 Chron. v. 1, 2.

And the right of *Primogeniture* was confined to the male opening the womb; so that, if a daughter came first, the right ceased in the subsequent sons.

It must have been for some very important end that God marked out this circumstance of the *first-born*, the first that opened the womb, with so extraordinary characters; that, as the *first-born* amongst men was to be holy to the Lord, and to officiate as *Priest*, or *Intercessor*, the *first-born* among beasts were also to be holy to the

Lord; to be offered to him, if clean; if unclean, to be ransomed.

Who, then, can doubt that the prerogative of PRIESTHOOD was annexed to the *first-born*, to keep in mind, and to point forth, that the great INTERCESSOR was to be a *first-born*; and that the *first-born*, in every family, were chosen for the PRIESTHOOD, as so many *Types*, or *symbolical* representations of him?

At the first peopling, and, afterwards, at the re-peopling of the earth, when men began to spread, and separate into new settlements, it was necessary to keep up the service of God, and the knowledge of his REVELATION, by the established SYMBOLS; to have a *Priest* who could shed BLOOD, and make atonement, in every family. And it seems certain every family had its *Priest*, (*the first-born*), its holy things, and all the appurtenances of religious service.

When ambition joined many families into commonwealths, or kingdoms, and human prudence would make laws, this right of PRIESTHOOD could not fail to come under some regulations, different from the original INSTITUTION; though, for the first ages of the world, it remained still in the highest esteem.

When men, from their vain *imaginations*, began to mistake, or misinterpret the original REVELATION, and to devise new notions, and new services, for themselves, it became necessary to republish REVELATION, with all the marks of omnipotent power; and, to prevent mistakes for the future, it was fit to erect the *Jewish* state, as above hinted, and to give them the keeping of the LAW, and the observation of all the rites and ceremonies.

But, as this LAW could not possibly have been so accurately observed whilst the PRIESTHOOD was executed, at large, by the *first-born* in every family, it pleased God to alter the original institution, and to make choice of one particular tribe for his service; and, out of that tribe, of the *first-born* and his descendents for ever to serve at the altar, and to represent the *High First-born*, the great *Intercessor*, in all the *symbolical* service that sup-
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ported the knowledge, the faith, the hope of those that feared God.

And, in the very order for changing the INSTITUTION, the knowledge of the original Institution is preserved; the *Levites* are said to be taken in place of the *first-born*; and the regard for the *first-born* is still preserved, as holy to the Lord, by making it necessary to redeem them by an oblation; not to speak of the prerogatives still accruing to them by the *Jewish* civil constitution.

Though the *Jewish* law has a particular additional reason for the sanctity of the *first-born*, to commemorate the delivery of their first-born from the common calamity of the first-born in *Egypt*; yet, by the proceeding of God towards the *Egyptian* first-born, it is evident the notion of their importance was strong, before that event.

In the original message which *Moses* was to deliver from *JEHOVAH* to *Pharaoh*, *Israel* is called his first-born; and, if *Pharaoh* did not dismiss him, *JEHOVAH* was to slay *Pharaoh's* first-born; and the same *Israel* is, afterwards, called a nation of *Priests*.

When *Pharaoh*, hardened by his vain heart, and doubtless prompted by the *Priests* of those gods whom he served, refused to let the *first-born*, the *Priests* of *JEHOVAH*, go, the threat was literally executed; all his first-born were slain, and the *first-born* of *Israel* were delivered.

If *Egypt* had any hopes from their *first-born*, the threat was severe, and the execution terrible; and we see it prevailed, above all the other judgments, for the deliverance of *Israel*.

And that *Egypt* had hopes from their *first-born*, is very likely, from what appears to have been the practice, and opinion, of their neighbours; who burned to *Molech*, and sacrificed, on great exigences, their *first-born*, in hopes of placating the offended Deity: Whence could a practice so seemingly monstrous come, but from the first promise misunderstood?

Esau's selling his birthright, the infamous character that brought him, the seemingly extraordinary steps his mother took, (when it is not observed that she was directed

rected by the *Oracle*), and the loss of the blessing consequent upon it, sufficiently shew the high esteem of *Primogeniture*, before the days of *Pharaoh*. And, indeed, the parting so cheap with a privilege so high, as representing the *Intercessor* between God and Man, gives a very vile idea of *Esau*; if one can help calling him a *Free-thinker*, which he could hardly be, considering his concern for the blessing.

That *Priesthood* and *Primogeniture* went, anciently, together, we gather from prophane history:

Rex, Anius idem, Phœbique sacerdos.

The *Lacedemonian* Kings were both *Priests* and *Kings*, because it could not be decided which was *first-born*; and almost all the ancient kings sacrificed.

Whatever corruptions *imagination* introduced in religion, the *Priesthood* was ever held in great honour. The original institution was strangely depraved in the *Roman* state, but still the *Priesthood* continued to enjoy, at least, its ancient titles; the term of *Rex sacrorum*, *Rex sacrificulus*, went down through the *Roman* commonwealth, where the title of *Rex* was abominated. And the *Roman* Emperors, notwithstanding their ignorance, and vanity of aspiring after *DEIFICATION* for themselves, yet affected the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, as an honour, and a security to their government.

The religious regard for *SACRIFICATURE*, and the reverence for the *PRIESTHOOD*, must have been stamped deep upon the minds of men, by a very extraordinary authority; else they could not have endured for so many generations, and amongst nations so little conversant with each other.

Though *Rome*, and the *Greek* commonwealths, established on levelling principles, seem to have forgot that any prerogative at all was due to *Primogeniture*; yet it was not so with more northern nations, whose notions were less corrupted with *imagination*s. The *Goths*, the *Franks*, and the other people called *Barbarians*, who overthrew the *Roman* Empire, preserved continually a regard

gard for it, and have left large prerogatives attending upon it over all *Europe*.

As the original REVELATION, for the preservation whereof those rites, ceremonies, and observances, were instituted, discovered to man, in the ordinance of SACRIFICATURE, the chief foundation of his faith, and hope; so, it is evident from other rites, observances, and symbols or emblems, constantly observed, and preserved, that from the beginning man was taught his duty, what he was to do with respect to, and what he was to believe concerning the Deity.

Of this the universal practice of ABLUTION, or washing with water, is an instance which, from the earliest times, has taken place over the whole known world.

The *Israelites*, before they received the LAW, were to wash themselves when they were to approach the presence of God; all nations had their LUSTRATIONS, by sprinkling of water; the *High-Priest*, and his sons, were to wash their flesh, as often as they went about any part of the sacred work; and the children of *Israel*, upon any uncleanness, were to wash with water, in many cases, with particular ceremonies.

Touching any filth, or nastiness, a dead carcass of any kind, the sore or issue of man, or woman, were said to pollute, were sufficient to debar the party from appearing before the Lord, who is described as abominating every thing that is unclean; and ABLUTION, with certain other observances, were sufficient to put an end to that uncleanness, and to admit to the service of God.

No man, in his senses, can think that the external uncleanness of any person, in the literal sense, or the imputed uncleanness, as one may say, by the touch of an unclean thing, could be offensive to God; much less that washing with water, considered as an external act only, could remove any real, internal uncleanness; and therefore it is impossible to doubt that both the one and the other signified something more than is in the *letter* expressed.

Though, by the *Light of Nature*, we can discover that
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this creation had an author, eternal, infinitely perfect, and, particularly, infinitely just, good, wise, and intelligent; yet we, who can frame to ourselves no adequate idea of our own souls, and who know nothing about them, but the little we collect from what we feel transacting in ourselves, ought not to be surpris'd, that, without REVELATION, we can frame to ourselves no just notion of the invisible God; but ought rather to be amazed at the impudence of those who pretend to decide what God is, or is not, and what he can, or cannot do, from the notions they have framed to themselves of his attributes, nature, and perfection.

The first hint we have in the *sacred Book* that can help us to any notion of the Deity, is, that man was framed in his LIKENESS, and according to his image; from whence we may not only collect the intelligence of the Deity, which *Nature* sufficiently discovers, but also inclinations, or dispositions, in the divine mind, to which those in the mind of man, in the state of perfection, were something similar.

Disliking, hatred, anger; liking, pleasure in the actions of creatures, love, jealousy, inclination restrained, compassion and concern, are affections which the *Wise-men* of this world hold the Deity incapable of, they look so like passions that cannot touch a Being infinitely perfect, and essentially happy; and in this reasoning they agree with *Epicurus*, who rejected all providence, touching the things of this world, because he looked upon the care it presupposed to be troublesome to the Deity.

But REVELATION differs from these *Wise-men*. It describes the Deity as possessed of affections, and inclinations, similar to those that a perfect man may feel in himself, and something still higher and peculiar to God: Detestation, hatred and abhorrence, of sin; Anger, and wrath against the sinner, as such; Compassion towards the miserable, and concern; Desire, though sometimes without success, to save, and to reform; Love to those that do well, satisfaction in their well-doing; Pleasure in the acknowledgments, and praises, of those benefited, and attention to their requests; as well as jealousy, and indignation,

indignation, at the setting up any *Rival* for acknowledgment and praise.

Now, if any man will give himself leave to consider to what purpose God displayed so much wisdom, power, and goodness, in the formation, and preservation, of this whole material system, of man, and of all other living creatures; to what purpose man had discerning and reason given him; to what purpose he had the ideas, and the law of right and wrong, imprinted on his mind; and to what purpose he had in his heart planted a disposition to admire, to adore, to reverence, to acknowledge, to thank, and to praise; he cannot long be in suspense between REVELATION and IMAGINATION, but must assent to the truth of what the Deity has revealed.

Did God exert infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, in the creation of this world; did he give man eyes, and understanding, to see that wisdom, power, and goodness, and a heart disposed to admire, adore, and praise; and will it nevertheless be said, that this admiration, adoration, and praise, is indifferent to him? Must it not, necessarily, be concluded, that these things are well-pleasing to the Deity, and that the man who yields them is acceptable to him, stands in his favour, and good-will, and may be considered as beloved of him? And must it not, with equal certainty, be concluded, that the man who refuses to answer the end of his creation; who neglects to pay God that adoration, praise, and service, that is due; who fixes his heart on the creature, in place of the Creator; and who gratifies those lusts, and pursuits, he has set up in the room of God, at the expence of breaking the laws of right and wrong, implanted in his breast; is disagreeable to God, the object of his anger, and indignation; and that his sinful, treasonable actions are offensive to that Being that delights in right, in harmony, and in order?

Philosophers may puzzle themselves, and others, with reasoning, from abstract notions which they have framed to themselves, as they think fit; they possibly may not see how a Being, infinitely and essentially perfect and happy, can admit of accession to, or diminution from that hap-

happiness: but their not being able perfectly to comprehend how this is so, will be no good reason to disbelieve what the Deity declares concerning himself; or to persuade that God is not pleased with the doing of his will, and displeased at doing the contrary.

And, if we can bring ourselves up to believe, that the infinitely perfect SPIRIT is pleased, and affected, with the rectitude of the spirits of men, with the sentiments therein framed, and with the joy and gratitude that flows thence, in expressions of praise, acknowledgment, and adoration, we shall have small ground to doubt (what the Deity formally reveals) that his SPIRIT acts reciprocally on men, that it enlightens, enlivens, and encourages them towards their duty, and felicity.

Nor is the cessation of miracles, for some centuries; or the observation, that nature follows, in all things falling under our cognisance, a settled, fixed, mechanical course, pursuant to certain established rules, any ground to doubt of the communication between the infinite SPIRIT, and the spirits of men, which, the Scripture says, is and ever has been open. The godly disposition, the religious actions, of the soul, operate, as one may say, mechanically upon the Deity, producing satisfaction and complacency; and that, again, acts reciprocally upon the soul, by that sort of mechanism, or manner of operation, by which spirit operates on spirit. Were the case not so, God would not have been delighted with prayers, and praises; he would not have commanded and encouraged them; and the duty of man, in the religious acts of the heart, instead of being a blessing and enjoyment, would be a burden to him.

We are so well acquainted with the perturbations, the transports, the ruffles, that pleasures and passions produce in ourselves, that we are unwilling to allow any such affections in the Deity: But why must affections and inclinations produce such disturbances in the Deity as they do in us? May not God detest sin, dislike the sinner, and even destroy him, without being ruffled, or suffering his essential happiness to be impaired? May he not have af-
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sections and inclinations like to ours, without those inconveniencies that, in our weak frame, attend them?

God cannot be desirous, says a *Reasoner*, that any thing should happen, and yet that thing not happen; because, if he were truly desirous, his OMNIPOTENCE would infallibly effect it. But, then, the *Reasoner* does not consider, that this desire is only spoken of the disposition, the inclination, of the Deity, and not of any formal act of the will. The inclination, the disposition, may lie strongly one way, and yet there may be insuperable obstacles that hinder to will what the mind inclines to.

A Prince may have the strongest inclination to pardon an offender convicted, suppose his favourite son, guilty of a crime of the highest nature, and most dangerous example, and yet reasons of justice and polity may determine his will not to follow that inclination. In the same way, why may not the Deity be desirous, and even solicitous, that a thing may happen, which, because of higher considerations, he cannot interpose in, that is, cannot formally and absolutely will should happen.

These reflections, and many more of the same kind, that must occur on reading the *Scriptures*, leave it very plain that the language of that book, which describes the Deity's actings, affections, and inclinations, in terms borrowed from the usage, the sentiments and resolutions of men, is not so figurative as it is generally supposed to be; and that we ought to understand it something more literally than *Reasoners* are willing to allow.

In every page of the sacred *Book* God inculcates his aversion to, and abhorrence of sin, and his detestation of sinners.

To give men some notion of this aversion, and dislike, he borrows that idea of loathing and abhorrence that men feel on the sight, or touch, of any nasty, unclean, loathsome object.

God represents himself *holy, pure, undefiled, separated from sinners, of purer eyes than that he can behold iniquity.*

He represents sin as uncleanness, pollution, loathsomeness, in the highest degree; and similitudes are taken from many vile, impure, abominable things to describe it.

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And he represents the sinner, as polluted by sin, unclean, and therefore abhorred, and incapable to approach his PURITY, in that unclean state.

But, then, as this picture, by itself, would be fit only to distract, and drive the sinner to despair; he, at the same time, represents a possibility of wiping away this pollution, and washing the sinner clean, by means very natural, and very easy to be come at.

To the end, therefore, that this image should be the more strongly impressed on mens minds, and the picture come the more frequently before their eyes, it pleased God, at the first REVELATION of his will, and INSTITUTION of religious ceremonies and service, to direct a total abstinence from the touch of every thing that was, either in itself, or in the apprehension of mankind, unclean, foul, or lothsome.

It pleased God, also, to command the abstaining from several things that do not seem, in their own nature, to be unclean or lothsome; and to declare that, by the very contact of such things, men became impure, were unclean, and abominable in the eyes of God; and therefore could not be admitted into his holy *Presence*, or to any religious act.

But this impurity was to be purged away by *Ablution*, or aspersion, according to the prescription in the several cases: when the party was washed in water, and purified, he might present himself before God; but if, knowing his uncleanness, he mixed in the service of God without being purified, the offence was capital, he was to be cut off from his people.

This constitution must, necessarily, produce the greatest nicety and care to preserve cleanliness, in those who put any value on the favour and service of God.

And, if they were not so stupid as to look only to the *Letter*, the external act, it must for ever keep in their view the purity and holiness of God; the ugliness and deformity of sin, the abhorrence God had of it, and of the sinner, the necessity of avoiding it, if one would have any communication with the Deity; and the mercy and goodness of God in providing a purification to cleanse from

from it, such as could as easily be come at as common water, and was as effectual to remove the filth of sin, as water was for common nastiness.

The whole of this INSTITUTION, which was as ancient and universal as sacrifice, is obviously *symbolical* and instructive; and, if the real meaning of it was lost, if men began to think there was any real impurity in the touch of a dead carcass, or any real virtue, to purge sin, in water, it must be evidence of their utter degeneracy, blindness and corruption.

Perhaps, things not really impure, were to be avoided as such, to create the greater circumspection, and to bring the instruction oftner in view.

It is not reasonable to think, that God should enjoin, or prohibit, in matters of religion, any thing in itself absolutely indifferent, under severe penalties, purely to be a test of obedience.

But it is reasonable to think, that a thing in itself indifferent may be commanded, to keep up the memory of any fact, or precept, to impart knowledge, and preserve instruction.

Abstaining from the altar after any external pollution, could not possibly have been enjoined, under the pain of death, but for the important lesson it was intended to teach, of the holiness of God, and the purity of heart necessary to those that would approach him.

Eating the fruit of the *tree of knowledge of good and evil*, would not have been prohibited; but to warn our first parents against the ambitious desire of knowing more than came to their share, and the presumptuous conceit of relying on their own knowledge, and following their own *imaginations*, which destroyed them, and continues to mislead and undo multitudes of their weak, vain descendants.

That species of Infidels that glories in the title of FREE-THINKERS, who set up their own knowledge and understanding against the *Revelation* of God, split upon the same rock on which our first parents shipwrecked, notwithstanding the *beacon* that has been fixed on it from the creation of the world.

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Circumcision may have served for a mark of distinction to the *Israelites*, because it was not practised by their neighbours in *Canaan*, though it was by the other descendants of *Abraham* and *Isaac*, *Ishmael* and *Esau*: But it had undoubtedly a higher meaning, and probably an origin earlier than the days of *Abraham*.

That it had a higher meaning, is certain from the frequent declarations that a *circumcised* heart, a heart cut off and separated from all unruly lusts, and affections, is what God delights in.

And that it had an earlier origin, seems to be very evident, from the early observance of that institution, amongst many nations who cannot be believed to have received it from *Abraham*, or his descendants.

Men may dream, but it is impossible to persuade one that has his eyes open, and who reflects on the bitter animosities that must have been between the *Egyptians* and the *Israelites*, the high contempt the former must have entertained of the latter, the vanity and tenaciousness of the *Priests* of *Egypt* with respect to the mysteries of their religion, and the impiety and abomination which the religious service of the *Israelites* appeared to them to be stuffed with, that the *Egyptian Priests* (and they, principally, were in the earliest times *circumcised*) would have submitted to follow the despised, detested *Israelites* in a bloody practice of this kind, and would have transmitted it, as sacred, to their descendants.

And, indeed, if it had been meant only for a sign of distinction for *Israel*, it ought not to have descended to *Ishmael*, and *Esau*, but ought to have been confined to the twelve tribes.

It may, reasonably, therefore be looked on as one of the original *Institutions* appointed just after the *FALL*, which, though retained here and there, particularly in *Egypt*, had nevertheless been left off in *Abraham's* country, where idolatry began to prevail; and was therefore renewed to *Abraham*, when he was selected, from his depraved country, to be the father of a people to whom the *original Revelation* should be *republished*, and who were to become the keepers of the *Oracles of God*.

Taking this, then, to be the case, and recollecting that *Eve* proved the tempter to *Adam*; that love to her, who had forfeited by eating, prevailed with him to follow her fate; that inclination to women is the most fierce, the most ungovernable of the desires and lusts of men; and that it was fit to establish some very sensible memorial of the offence at the *Fall*, that should carry instruction along with it, to curb and bridle noxious desires: who can help concluding, that *Circumcision* was appointed to fix a permanent MARK on that part of the body, the gratification of the lust whereof, had so great a share in the seduction of mankind; and thereby to admonish against all lusts and carnal gratifications, and to advise and instruct men to cut off all sensual desires, and to wean themselves from them?

Lying carnally with woman, even with a man's own wife, than which nothing is more natural, or more innocent, is, in the eye of the LAW, a pollution, and required *Ablution*, before the party could be admitted to the Presence of God. Why? to prevent the setting too high a value on it; to check the too fond desire and pursuit of it; and to shew that such desires, encouraged, are inconsistent with that purity of heart that is required in the service of God, who claims possession of the whole heart, and will not admit of rivals. And, if this is the undeniable meaning of that prohibition, it is easy to see the sense of the *symbolical* act of cutting off, and flinging away, the FORESKIN of the flesh; than which nothing can be a more proper Emblem of forward, fierce, fleshly appetites, and sensual delights.

Though *Circumcision* might have been given to *Israel*, as a MARK to distinguish them from the other adjacent nations surrounding *Canaan*, and was, by them, to be considered as a Mark of the COVENANT between them and God; yet that does not say that the original intention, and emblematical use of it, was to be dropt, or lost; on the contrary, it is evident, from the frequent allusions plainly made to the *symbolical* sense of it by the inspired writers, that it was still kept in view, and principally to be observed, by *Israel*.

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And, in like manner, many of the *Institutions*, which were in practice anciently, seem to be applied to particular actions or events which were near the time of the renewal of those *Institutions* in the *Jewish Law*. But it does not follow from these applications, that the original *Institutions*, or the sense and meaning of them, were to be dropt or lost. In an earthly affair, each *Israelite*, when he entered upon lands in *Canaan*, was to bring a basket of fruit, and make a *CONFESSION* why he performed that action: which proves that those *symbolical* acts had a formal meaning; and suggests that there may have been original, formal *Confessions*, acknowledgments, and prayers, attending the acts of Religion or Devotion; though, not being recorded, otherwise than in general, that once all the Earth had one *Confession*, the particular Forms have not descended to us, with sufficient Evidence.

Nothing is more unjust than the suggestion, that the observation of the *SABBATH*, or seventh Day, was to take place only amongst the *Israelites*.

If the *Scriptures* are to be the rule, the *Sabbath* had its origin immediately upon the Creation, and before the *FALL*. God is said to have *RESTED* on the seventh day from his work, and to have *hallowed the sabbath day*, on which it was criminal, nay capital, to do any work.

If the ancient profane writers are to be searched, the *Sabbath* will be found so ancient, that it could not possibly have been derived from the *Jewish Law*. For, not to take notice of the frequent mention to be met with of *Sabbaths*, and days of rest, which might have been borrowed from *Jewish* customs, it is certain that the most ancient *Greeks*, and the more ancient *Egyptians*, divided the time by *HEBDOMADES*, a circle or revolution of seven days, to each of which they gave the name of some planet, except the seventh, which they dedicated to the sovereign of all the heavenly luminaries, the *SUN*; and this *CYCLE* being no proper, constituent part of the moon, month, or year, must necessarily have flowed from *Institution*: Nor could any thing be a more proper, permanent *MEMORIAL* of the Creation, than the appointing the observation of the seventh day; at the
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same time that, debarring man from work, it sequestered him to the contemplation of the Creation, and its Creator, so Formation and its Former, and allowed his soul time to entertain itself with objects peculiarly fitted for it.

If every seventh day man was to be stopped in his career, in pursuit of low, earthly comforts, by a holy rest, which it was capital to profane by labour; if he was to observe this rest, week after week, in memory of God's having rested the seventh day, after having finished the creation in six: no mean could be devised more likely to keep up the memory of the creation, and to banish the extravagant *Imagination* that the world was eternal; and no *Institution* could lead more necessarily, and directly, to employ man, at least one seventh part of his time, in those speculations that tend to keep up communication between the soul and the Deity, and to preserve the memory and knowledge of the *Revelation* of God to man; nor could man have been guilty of a more fatal piece of perverseness than to discontinue and leave off the observance, which, in all appearance, drew along with it the loss of the true sense and meaning of all the other *Institutions*. It is one of the reproaches the most insisted on against the backsliding *Israelites*, that they neglected the sabbaths of the Lord.

In the whole of the primitive religious service, there is not any circumstance casual; every particular, every gesture is instructive.

In the PRESENCE of God man fell upon his face to the ground; and, by that act, humbly confessed his ORIGINAL: hence, bowing to the ground is the formal word for worshipping, which it was high treason to practise toward any idol. And when, from that posture, man raised himself to praise, and to bless God, he raised himself no farther than the knee, still so far retaining the posture of humility; and from this posture the word to signify *Blessing* is taken; as *bowing to the ground* is used to signify *worshipping*, *kneeling* is used to signify *blessing*.

If the original *Revelation* was compleat, man must have

have been told that the Deity was to descend to this earth, to dwell there amongst men, and to instruct by precept and example.

If this was *originally revealed*, it must have been recorded; by appointing some *symbolical* observance, some *emblematical* representation.

Accordingly, in *the Republication of the Law* to the *Israelites*, the appointment the most remarkable was, to erect, first a tabernacle, and then a temple, for the reception of the *Presence* of the Deity; who made repeated declarations, that he was to dwell in the midst of the children of *Israel*, that he was to reside, in the tabernacle first, and then in the house that was to be built for him, and was more particularly to reside between the *CHE-RUBIMS*.

And, the tabernacle first, and then the temple, having been built, *a Cloud, the glory of the Lord, or the symbol of his presence*, filled these mansions, and the Deity from thence gave responses, and directions, and pronounced judgments.

In the sacred writings there are many formal intimations that this *Institution*, and dispensation, amongst the *Jews*, was *typical*, and predictive that the real *GLORY* of the Lord was to come to the temple; that the temple, the *symbol* of his mansion, was to be destroyed; and that the figurative, the *emblematical* service, and *Institution*, was to cease, and to give way to the real *Presence*, and spiritual instruction of the Deity.

And, indeed, by the cessation of all that service, and by the destruction of the temple, immediately after the Lord who was expected came to it, we evidently see the *Institution* could have been to no other end but to create, and keep up, that expectation.

But, if we look a little farther back, we shall see the belief of God's residence among men, and the practice of building tabernacles, and houses or temples, for that residence, much earlier than *the republication of the Law* from *Sinai*.

Most of the ancient nations had temples, dedicated, for the supposed residence of their gods. The *Philistines* had

had a house for *Dagon*, before the *Israelites* had any for *JEHOVAH*; and many cities in *Canaan* are named from the temples of the Deities worshipped by the inhabitants.

Jacob promised to make the stone which he anointed at *Luz*, *Beth-el*, the house of God: and he was as good as his word; for, some years after, he there built an altar, and sacrificed.

The *Israelites*, upon their going out of *Egypt*, before the *Mosaick* tabernacle was built, had a tabernacle in which they believed the *Presence* of God to be, and in which the pot of *Manna*, &c. was laid up.

The idolaters, who came up amongst the *Israelites*, are reproached with having carried in the wilderness the tabernacles of their gods, whilst the living God was so miraculously feeding, and protecting them.

This Practice, which could not possibly have come from the *Law* of *Moses*, but which the *Law* of *Moses*, as well as the usage of *Jacob*, and of the *Israelites*, shews to have been approved of by God, must necessarily have flowed from divine Institution, as early as the original Revelation; and was perfectly well calculated to keep in mind the original intimation, that God was to humble himself so far as to descend to dwell amongst men, and to create a constant expectation of that event.

And, as we have already observed on other occasions, if this practice had not had some very authentick institution for its original, it is scarce possible it ever should have universally obtained; nothing being more contradictory to the common notions which the *light of nature* could afford, than the belief that the immaterial, incomprehensible Being, should dwell in houses made by hands, and sojourn with such grovelling creatures as man. The universal practice, then, in this instance, is strong evidence that it does not depend upon human invention. *Imagination*, indeed, would mislead from the intention of the Institution, and would graft many impertinencies on it, whenever the real design was mistaken; but there is hardly any example of an observance, so seemingly unnatural as this, if universal, that cannot be traced up

to a divine original, at least to some divine intimation, or *institution*, that gave occasion to it.

As the *Institution* we are now upon, was of a very high nature, and important to be observed, and relied on, it is extremely probable that the Deity, to devout men (for to such, we know from Scripture, God was pleased to reveal himself) thought fit to give particular proofs of his *Presence* in the house, tabernacle, or place appointed for his residence. He spoke to *Moses* from the tabernacle of the congregation, before the *Mosaick* tabernacle was erected: And if those temples, or tabernacles, were so honoured on particular occasions, we may cease to wonder why the *Gentiles* took up the belief of *Oracular* responses from their deities, (which, again, is a conceit they hardly could have taken up without precedent). Knowing that the true God revealed his will to his true servants, in those places which he authorised to be set aside as for his *Presence*, and believing their false gods true, and themselves acceptable servants, they naturally would expect such communications; and their *Imaginations* might impose on them, or make their belief an easy prey to any impostor, any *Priest* of a false god, who should have courage and cunning enough to frame a lie.

When we see an observance has, universally, prevailed amongst the heathens, which is afterwards approved of by the *Law* of *Moses*, we justly conclude it sprung from divine authority.

When we see customs, obtaining among the early heathens, which are prohibited by the *Law*, we may safely conclude that those customs were not of divine *Institution*, but were derived either from some laudable, pious practice of the believing *Patriarchs*, which had been abused, or from *Imagination*.

Thus we see the respect among the earliest *Syrian* and *Greek* heathens for *BAITULIA*, stones which were set up on end, anointed, and believed to be sacred, and in process of time transferred to their temples, and revered as statues of their gods.

And we cannot avoid seeing the practice of consecrating, as we say, a stone by *Jacob*, when, upon the ma-
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nifestation of the Deity, he set it up, poured oil upon it, vowed a vow, and said it should be *BETH-EL*, the house of God.

But, however that devout act, that solemn memorial of *Jacob's* vow, and of the merciful appearance to him, might have been acceptable to God; and however such things might have been religiously, and acceptably, done by other pious men, before and after him; yet we see the practice is in the *Law* prohibited, perhaps because of its being liable to abuse, and because of the corruptions it had already introduced.

We see, also, that the *Patriarchs* shewed particular, sacred respect to some sort of trees. The *Oaks* of *Mamre* were, in some degree, sacred to *Abraham*. It is not impossible they might have made some species of trees *Memorials*, to the end they might think on the thing such tree represented, so often as the tree came in their view. *Abraham* planted a Grove, or Tree, at *Beerseba*, and called there on the name of *Jehovah*, the everlasting God. Many of these emblematical trees, put together, might form groves; and we do know that groves were amongst the most ancient places of Worship, amongst the Nations; and that particular sorts of trees were held sacred to certain deities, amongst those that had forgot, or rather misapplied, the service of the true God.

These observances continued to be revered as late as *Homer*: *Hector* wishes for a Stone, or an Oak Tree, from whence he might with safety speak to *Achilles*; and *loqui à quercu* is, in the language of the old *Italians*, to speak with safety.

Amongst the things which were abused, and, by the renewal or *Jewish* institution, were prohibited, ordered to be discontinued, cut down, and destroyed, the *Jews* have taken in sacred Trees, or Groves: But, it appears, the word which they construe *Groves*, signifies images of *Venus*, or &c. and it appears that they used sacred Trees, and Groves, to the last.

There is another instance, of the same kind, in the case of what we translate *ORNAMENTS*. The original notion of the word carries in it the idea of witnessing, testifying,

stiffing, &c. and some passages of the Scriptures seem to point at a very surprising regard shewed by the Deity to those ornaments. After the defection in making the golden calf, God commands the people, by *Moses*, *Exod.* xxxiii. 4, 5, 6. to put off their ornaments from them, that he might know what to do unto them. And the people put off their ornaments, and mourned. We cannot doubt, then, that the people looked upon those ornaments as defences against any sudden mischiefs, or unlucky casualties; and that this opinion had some authority from the conduct of the Deity, in providence, and from the practice of godly men, if not even from divine institution; and to this early observance are owing all the *Amulets*, all the *Talismans*, the *Annuli*, amongst the ancients, which they looked upon as *averruncating* of evil, and as so many defences and preservatives from harm.

Though we know nothing of the Ornaments of the *Israelites*, yet, looking upon the ancient *Talismans*, the *Abraxas*, the *Annuli*, and other gems, that are still preserved, which are full of inscriptions, and *hieroglyphical* figures, of which we can make no certain sense, at this day; we may naturally conclude, that the earliest ornaments, which had the virtue the latter were only supposed to have, were formed somewhat in the same way; and that the *hieroglyphical* figures, with which they were charged, represented some sacred discoveries, or promises, worn on certain parts of the body, to be perpetual memorandums of the propositions expressed in those emblems.

And, accordingly, when the Law was given, by *Moses*, in writing, in the room of that preserved, formerly, by *hieroglyphicks*, we see injunctions that the people should wear the Law, or parts of it, as Signs upon their hands, and for *Frontlets* between their eyes, *Deut.* vi. 8. which the later *Jews* understanding literally, wrote passages, as they conceived the most remarkable, of the Law on vellum, which they rolled up in *Phylacteries*, and wore on their arms, and foreheads, with a superstitious regard, in the days of Christ; and it is for the ostentatious, hypocritical use of them, making broad their *Phylacteries*, the *Pharisees* are reproved, *Matth.* xxiii. 5. and not for their

their being at all used, as some suppose; which shews that the wearing those *Signs* and *Frontlets* was *literally*, and not in a *figurative* sense only, enjoined.

If we observe the passages of the *LAW* of *Moses*, in which the wearing those *Signs* and *Frontlets* is recommended, we shall find them exceeding important; and that the intent of the recommendation is, to keep, for ever, and attentively, in memory the particular transaction or declaration to which they relate, by way of evidence that such a transaction happened, or such a declaration was made; and in this light they agree with the sense of the word we translate *Ornaments*, which implies, *bearing evidence, testifying*: and, if the meaning of this later *INSTITUTION* was to inculcate, by written *Memorandums*, the important passages of the *LAW*, or the *Jewish* economy, it is very natural to think that the end of those *Hieroglyphical Ornaments*, in use before the *written Law*, was of the same nature, to present frequently to mens view the most signal articles of the *original Revelation*.

Men who have not sufficiently enquired, may make it an objection to the goodness of God, with an intent to impeach the truth of the *Christian* religion, that the world, on the supposition of the *Christian* scheme, was suffered to lie so long in darkness; that the *Judaick* religion was confined, and hidden, in mysteries; and that the *Christian* religion came too late, and attended with too slender evidence: but, after giving due attention to these hints, they must confess the original publication of the *revealed will* of God full, and perfect; that instructive lessons were conveyed in every *Rite*, *Ceremony*, *Observance* and *Institution*; that the strongest *Memorials* were established of what was declared, was to be believed, and hoped for; that perpetual *Memorandums* were appointed for bringing into mens minds their duty, and strengthening their belief, and their hopes; and that this knowledge, those institutions, and these hopes, reached over the bulk of mankind, before the *renewal of the Law* to *Israel*: though mankind so corrupted themselves, so cooled and slackened in their duty, and pursued so wantonly, and presumptuously, their own *imaginations*, as to have

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have lost almost all the knowledge of the things *revealed*, and of the end and design of the *Institutions*; and to have preserved no more than some great lines of external observances; which serve at this day for evidence, only, that there was a very early REVELATION of the will of God to mankind, joined with hopes of mercy; but do not shew what the particulars were of that REVELATION, which can be gathered, only, from considering the sacred *Institution*, as it is delivered, compleatly, in the LAW, explained by the PROPHETS, and perfected by the GOSPEL.

But, after all, though in the *Institutions* already referred to, one may see, very distinctly, almost all the articles of the *Christian* faith, and hope; yet, if the original REVELATION went no farther, it must be owned there are some great points wanting, something disclosed in the GOSPEL, relating to the Deity, that the declarations and *institutions*, hitherto mentioned, do not extend to, and that the *light of Nature*, by itself, could not discover.

The *Gospel* informs, precisely and formally, That though the Godhead is essentially *one*, yet there are in the divine essence *three Persons*, equal in perfection, the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Spirit*; that the *Son*, to satisfy essential justice, took on him flesh, was united to the humanity, suffered for sinners, made atonement for them, raised the *Man*, to whom he was joined, from the dead, glorified him with himself, and is to make continual intercession for sinners; and that the *Holy Spirit*, upon the ascension of the *Son of God*, was sent to instruct, to comfort, and, as one may say, to inspire all who, believing in *Jesus Christ*, should endeavour to do their duty, to serve, and to glorify God.

That this is true, every *Christian* believes; and whoever does so, feels the expediency of being acquainted with it, as it exalts his sentiments of the wisdom, the justice, the mercy, the goodness, the love, of God; and lets him know how to place his acknowledgment, his service, his adoration, at the same time that it cautions him against those sins and abuses that can be washed away no other ways than by the blood of the *Son of God*.

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And, as this is true, and highly necessary to be known, it would not be of a piece with the rest of the tenor of the goodness and condescension of the Deity, if, in *the original Revelation of Grace*, this was not also intimated to mankind, however the perversity and presumption of human *imagination*, and invention, may have confounded, and thereby, in a great measure, have lost the *Memorials* instituted for preserving this REVELATION.

It will be granted by every *Free-thinker*, because it is the foundation of his own belief, or rather unbelief, that, consulting nature, *Unity* is essential to the Deity; and that nothing is less deducible from *the Light of Nature* than a *Plurality* of Deities; nay, that a *Plurality*, in the common sense, is inconsistent with it, and therefore impossible.

It is, at the same time, true in fact, that all the ancient nations entered readily into the belief of a *Plurality* of Deities, how contrary soever the opinion might be to *the light of Nature*; and continued in that faith till Christianity beat them out of it.

One would not infer from this, that *Polytheism* was an article of *the original Revelation*, because we see the heathens grafted many mistaken imaginations upon what was originally revealed; but it seems to be a fair conclusion, that something, concerning the Deity, not discoverable by *the light of Nature*, and seemingly dissonant to it, was *originally revealed*, from whence this false but universal opinion took its birth: and, if the doctrine of the *Trinity* was originally promulgated, and believed, it is easy to see how it might degenerate into POLYTHEISM, as the Christian TRINITY ran the hazard of doing.

If this reflection is candidly weighed; if one considers, that the first teacher of *Polytheism* could not possibly deduce his doctrine from *reason*, but must necessarily support it from authority; and if one then enquires what degree of authority would be sufficient to draw all mankind into the settled belief of this monstrous proposition, or indeed of any thing a-kin to it, from which this, by *imagination* or deduction, can be derived, he must needs conclude the authority must be, at least believed, divine,
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before reasonable creatures could give credit to it, and could be brought to speak of, and make their addresses to *Gods* in the plural number.

It is impossible to make this reflection without joining to it, what has been already observed, that the word *ELOHIM*, used in the *Hebrew* Scriptures to signify God, is plural; owned by all to be such, and particularly by the *Jews*, who have the idea of plurality in the highest contempt, and who make in their translations a very ridiculous distinction, rendering the same specifick word, when, as they apprehend, it relates to the true God, *singular*, but *plural*, *Dii*, *Gods*, when it relates to the objects of the pagan worship.

This reflection is the more important, that the word *ELOHIM* has confessedly a singular, *ELAH*, used sometimes, but not often, in scripture. Now, when the sacred writers make use almost always of the plural word, not from necessity, but from choice, it is hardly possible to believe that this choice is altogether without meaning, and that a word, fit not to inform, but to mislead, was employed by the Deity, in the written instructions given to mankind.

The *Jews*, and with them those pretended *Christians* who reject the *Trinity*, as well as some who admit it, but are loth to lay much stress on the idiom of a language they do not give themselves the trouble to understand, strive to invalidate this observation, by suggesting that the plural may be used *honoris causâ*, as Princes, in our days, express themselves, *WE* and *OUR*, and persons of condition, spoken to, are addressed by pronouns in the plural number.

But, not to insist on what is most certain truth, that the scripture-language is, in every other instance, opposite to this suggestion, constantly using the singular when *Jehovah* speaks of himself, and most frequently joining verbs and pronouns in the singular number to the plural *ELOHIM*; there are many cases in which the expression cannot possibly be reconciled to this *Jewish* pretence, of which this may be an example, *Gen. iii. 22. And Jehovah Elobim said, Behold, the man is become like one of us,*

to know good and evil. Here the expression is distinct, and unambiguous, and not to be twisted to the Jewish construction, by any force of figure, or example; *One of us* necessarily implies more than *one*: and the Jews and their followers are so sensible of it, that they pretend *Jehovah* is here speaking with and to the Angels, bringing them on the level with himself; which he no where else in the scripture does, and which there is no reason to suppose he does in this place, though it did not imply an absurdity; because the plural word *ELOHIM* preceding, sufficiently shews who the *Us* were, and forbids the application of that pronoun to any other set of beings.

As this text affords a demonstration, in its own kind, that the plural *ELOHIM* is not used by chance, but is the fruit of choice, and significative, care is taken in scripture to prevent the grafting the notion of *POLYTHEISM* on an expression that might lead so naturally to it.

And therefore, *Deut. vi. 4.* the great command which Christ, being interrogated, declared to be the first and highest of the *Law*, and which was directed to be laid up in the hearts of the *Israelites*, to be taught to their children, to be worn as *signs* upon their hands, and as *frontlets* between their eyes, and to be written on the posts of their houses, and on their gates, is ushered in with this remarkable admonition, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*; in the original, *Hear, O Israel, Jehovah our Elobim is one Jehovah*.

The word *Jehovah* is agreed by all to be the proper name or term for expressing the essence of the Deity; it is derived from the verb that signifies *to be*, and therefore imports, *being, existence, ó wv*, he who is, who exists, necessarily.

This noun is singular, and knows no plural; wherefore there would be very little occasion for the declaration, that *Jehovah* is *one*, is not plural, if it were not for the plural word *ELOHIM*, which might lead into a mistake; to prevent which, the declaration was necessary, that though in *Jehovah* there were more *ELAHs* than

one, yet these different ELOHIM were but one *Jehovah*, one necessarily existent *Essence*; which is allowing a plurality, not of distinct Deities, but of distinct ELOHIM in the same *Essence*, Godhead, in *Jehovah*, who is one.

On occasion of mentioning the word *Jehovah*, the proper name or term used to signify the eternal, the necessarily existing Being, the cause and author of all other Being, it may not be improper to observe, that this name is of the highest antiquity, coeval in all appearance with the *original Revelation*, and given by the Deity, to express that grand character of his own nature, which modern wise-men value themselves on having, as they imagine, discovered from nature, and reason.

For, not to mention the authority of *Moses*, who makes use of that name just after describing the creation, it appears not to have been unknown to the ancients, though they lost the sense of it, and confounded themselves with new names for their fictitious Divinities. The oracle in *Macrobius* declares *Jao* to be the chief God; whence it is plain at least that the sound was known by those who consulted. The *Zeus* of the *Greeks*, was in all appearance from the same source; and the *Jupiter* of the *Romans* confesses more clearly that original: Anciently *Jupiter* was written and sounded *Jovis pater*; *Jovis* was the nominative, or, more properly, *Jehovah* with the Latin *-is* for a termination in all cases, and *Jovis pater* became by corruption, in length of time, *Jupiter*, though it retained more of the original sound in the *genitive*, and the other cases.

Now, though the *Roman* people and religion were but modern, compared with that of some other nations, yet is their *Jovis pater*, which took much time to be corrupted into *Jupiter*, very ancient; and, if they had their THEOLOGY from the *Hetruscans*, or from the *Phenicians*, the term *Jehovah* must have been very pure and distinct, when it came first into *Italy*, to have remained so long so uncorrupted, as we see it did. No man, in his senses, will think the ancient *Greeks*, and *Italians*, borrowed from the detested *Jews* the name of their God; and therefore it may be safely concluded, that the name which

which travelled thus into Greece and Italy, in the earliest times, was the name of the God of the whole earth, used and honoured by all flesh.

But, to return to the idea of the Deity given by revelation, though the unity of *Jehovah* is expressly settled, yet it is manifest from great numbers of texts; that there are different persons, different agents, in this essence, that have different characters, and are to be considered differently by men.

Besides *Jehovah*, who, by way of distinction, may be called the *first Person*, or the *Father*, in the language well known to all Christians, there is the *Name of Jehovah*, or the *Name Jehovah*, the *Word of Jehovah*, or the *Word Jehovah*, and the *Angel of Jehovah*, or the *Angel Jehovah*, with several other terms, all applicable to the *second Person*, or the *Son*, by the circumstances of the several passages; and there is the *Spirit of Jehovah*, or the *Spirit Jehovah*, to denote the *third Person*, who retains the same name in the Christian language.

Though the term the *Name of Jehovah*, is become so familiar to our ears in the sense that means only the title or appellation, or, metaphorically, the same and reputation of any one; yet there are flat texts to shew there is more in the matter; and that *personality*, as it is called, is ascribed to this thing called the *Name Jehovah*, or the *Name of Jehovah*.

Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. *Jehovah* promises to send his *Angel* before the people, of whom they are to beware that they do not offend him, for, says *Jehovah*, my *Name is in him*. This *Name* said to be in the *Angel* is something more than will tally with any reasonable acceptance of the word *Name*, unless you will suppose that word the *Name of Jehovah* to mean a *Person*.

In like manner, Psal. xx. 1. *The Name of the God of Jacob defend thee*; Isai. xxx. 27. *Behold, the Name of Jehovah cometh from far*; Zech. xiv. 9. *In that day Jehovah shall be one, and his Name one*; with infinite numbers of passages where the *Name of Jehovah* is said to be placed, to dwell, to act, shew to a demonstration that by the *Name Jehovah*, a person, and not a title, is meant;

and, indeed, that *person* by whom the Deity was to be revealed, discovered, and made known to mankind.

That there is something very extraordinary in this term *the Name of Jehovah*, and which corresponds ill with the notion of *unity* of the present set of rebellious *Jews*, is evident from the silly fictions they set up by which to account for the surprising use made of it. They suppose something divine to be in the *four letters* of which the word is composed; that it is the highest crime and prophanation to pronounce them, except in the *High Priest*, once a-year, on the day of expiation; and therefore never write, or attempt to pronounce that word, substituting in all their writings another word for it, and pronouncing, so often as *Jehovah* occurs in the reading of the scriptures, the word *Adonai* in place of it. They imagine something so sacred in these *letters*, that whoever could pronounce them truly, might work miracles, and controul the power of nature at pleasure; and they carry their frenzy on this subject so far, as to account for our Saviour's miracles, by saying, that, gaining admission into the temple, he stole the name *Jehovah* out of it, rightly wrote, and *pointed* as it ought to be pronounced; and, by being so possessed of that secret, by the force thereof wrought his wonders, and might have wrought as many more as he would. These circumstances will not prove that the term has the force I have ascribed to it, but surely they will convince any reasonable man, that there is something very remarkable in the expression, which has puzzled the *Jews* so much, and put them to such ridiculous shifts to get rid of the force of it.

Besides the *Name*, there is another term used to signify a *Person*, or *Agent*, in or of the Deity, under the title of *the Word of Jehovah*, or *the Word Jehovah*. This *Word* has many characters of action and personality that cannot possibly agree to what is simple or proper *speech*. *The Word Jehovah*, or *of Jehovah*, came; *the Word* spoke; *the Word* acted. *In Jehovah will I praise the Word; in God the Elobim will I praise the Word. Jehovah sent his Word, &c.* And therefore, without scruple

or

or hesitation, the Apostle St. *John* applies it to the *divine Person* that was joined to *Jesus*, agreeable to the plain scope of the *Old Testament*, and to even the notions of the *Jews*, of those times; whatever their successors, in opposition to the Christians, may have, since those days, devised, to obscure the light of the ancient scriptures.

That the ancient *Jews*, before their disputes with the Christians turned their brains, by the *Word of Jehovah* understood an active principle, distinct from the *first Person* in *Jehovah*, and also called properly *Jehovah*, is beyond contradiction evident from their ancient *Targums*, of age, if not equal to the advent of Christ, yet framed before their disputes with the Christians had forced them to coin new and perverse notions. All the actions of a distinct person are attributed to their *Mimra Jehovah*, the *Word of God*, in many hundred passages; and often, where *Jehovah* only is mentioned in the original, yet, where, according to their conceptions, which originally were true ones, the *second Person* is meant, they have, without hesitation, in their *Paraphrases* translated it *Mimra Jehovah*, or the *Word of Jehovah*; which leaves no doubt that the ancients understood the Scriptures, in this important article, as the Apostles did, and as we do.

If the *Targum* of *Onkelos*, which is agreed to be of great antiquity, was published before the Gospel came to be the object of the *Jews* opposition, this argument has all the force already given to it; and, if in an age later, it has no less weight; because no one can suppose that complaisance to the *Christians* produced the expressions relied on. And indeed all that suspicion is excluded, and additional force is gained to the reflection, by considering that *Philo* the *Jew*, who was contemporary with our Saviour, the Ambassador for the *Egyptian Jews* to *Caius Caesar*, unsuspected of Christianity, probably a stranger to it, suspected of a spirit of accommodation with *Platonick* or pagan notions in his writings, intending to make his notions as plausible and palatable to the learned heathens as possible, cannot divest himself of the notion of making the *WORD*, his *Logos*, a *Person*, nay, a *divine Person*, of infinite power, nearly

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allied to the Deity, though with a subordination that he can find no where in the sacred *Book*.

There is still another term, behind, which the *Jews* have much obscured, by confining the meaning to one of the senses which the word bears; it is *ANGEL*. The *Hebrew* word, from which *Malak* is derived, signifies, to send, to employ, to send on an errand, to do, or say, any thing: hence *Malak*, in *Greek* rendered ἀγγέλῳ; in *Latin*, promiscuously, *Angelus*, or *Nuncius*; in *English*, an *Angel*, or *Messenger*.

To this word, thus signifying, the *Translators*, who originally were *Jews*, and all their successors, have given the meaning of what we, in common speech, understand by an *Angel*, a *CREATED SPIRIT*, of which, we are taught to believe, there are immense numbers; and, what is worse, they have confined the sense to that meaning, inso-much that, when we hear of the *ANGEL JEHOVAH*, we are to understand by it such a *created Spirit*.

But it happens unlucky for this construction, that, almost always where the *ANGEL JEHOVAH* is mentioned, there are characters which shew that this *ANGEL* is *JEHOVAH*: for, either the *Angel* calls himself so, and speaks in the first person, as *JEHOVAH*; or the person to whom he is sent, acknowledges him to be such, and addresses him under that designation.

Gen. xviii. The *THREE* that appeared to *Abraham*, in the plains of *Mamre*, who are called sometimes *Men*, sometimes *Angels*, are said to be *Jehovah*; *Jehovah* is said to have appeared in that form; *HE* of the *Three* that talks to *Abraham*, speaks in the first person, as *Jehovah*, and *Abraham* addresses his answer to *HIM*, as to *Jehovah*.

Exod. iii. The *Angel Jehovah*, who appeared to *Moses* in the burning bush, speaks from the bush under the title *God*, gives himself the significant name which we translate, *I AM THAT I AM*, and is plainly understood to be *Jehovah*. *Deut. xxxiii. 16.* The good will of him that dwell in the bush.

Judg. xiii. The *Angel* that appeared to *Manoah's* wife, first, and then to himself, is acknowledged to be *Jehovah*.
And

And every *Angel*, called, of *Jehovah*, that appeared, or seemed in vision to appear, to the Prophets, either speak as *Jehovah*, or are spoken to as such.

Exod. xxiii. 20, 21. The *Angel* whom *Jehovah* was to send before the *Israelites*, and whom he calls his *Angel*, had his NAME in him, and was therefore to be observed. And,

Malachi iii. 1. The *Angel* (which we translate the *Messenger*) of the *Covenant*, is declared to be the *Lord*; and the *Lord* whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple: even the *Angel* of the *Covenant*, whom ye delight in.

The *Malak*, the *Messenger*, therefore, the *sent*, the *Angel* *Jehovah*, or of *Jehovah*, we see, is not always used to signify a created Being, but, on the contrary, to denote a *Person* of *Jehovah*, of the Deity, sent as a messenger to execute the will of *Jehovah*, of the Deity; and accordingly Christ, upon many occasions, declares that he is sent of the Father, and came to do the will of him that sent him: which tallies exactly with the language of, and with the ideas given in the *Old Testament*.

All these terms, the NAME, the WORD, the ANGEL OF JEHOVAH, with several others of the same kind, which evidently shew a distinction of *Persons* in *Jehovah*, are, by the characters that attend them, clearly applicable to one and the same Person, in the Gospel called the SON, from the second Psalm; the express image of the Father's person, who thought it no robbery to be equal with the Father; and by whom, and for whom, the world was made.

The *Old Testament*, in multitudes of texts, mentions a third character, with attributes of action as a distinct Person, the Spirit of *Jehovah*, which is said to do, and direct many things, almost always under that specific name, and in distinction to the other Persons or characters in the Deity; and the *New Testament* formally makes this Spirit a distinct Person, acting a proper part in the œconomy of grace to mankind.

When these things are duly weighed, men must be convinced that the godly, serious *Jews*, who studied their Scriptures with attention, and without prepossession, must have been satisfied that there was a distinction of
Persons

Persons in the Deity; and that the Word *Jehovah*, of *Jehovah*, for example, was distinct from the Spirit; and both from the *Father*, who sent the *Word*; and then their surprise will cease at the freedom and easiness with which Christ and his Apostles speak of the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Spirit*, as distinct *Persons* of the Deity, as a thing well known and understood, without any preamble or apology; whereas, if this had not been a notion commonly received by the intelligent, it is impossible that the *Preacher of Salvation* could have made use of, or applied it, without having first explained it, and so prepared the hearers for it.

And, accordingly, we find that, when Christ was examined by the Rulers, they did not at all boggle at the doctrine which mentioned *the Son of God*, but asked him whether he pretended to be such; and, upon his saying that he was, concluded him guilty of blasphemy, without further ceremony: which shews that the *Son of God* was a phrase known and familiar to them; as indeed it must be from the second *Psalms*. And surely they could not have entertained an idea of the *Son*, without also admitting an idea of the *FATHER*, which must have made *that term* also familiar to them.

So that in this instance it is, as in almost every other it will, on a careful examination, appear to be, *the New Testament* speaks the language of the *Old*; the principles and the sentiments are the same; and the *New* does little more than explain, and apply, what, by corrupt *Imagination*, through length of time, was obscured or perverted, and in some degree lost in the *Old*.

The same consideration that makes the knowledge of the *TRINITY* necessary for us, made it so to the believing *Jews*, to whom that mystery was disclosed in *the Old Testament* in writing; and made it so, also, to the first believers, to whom the mercy of God was discovered, whilst *hieroglyphical* records only were used; and therefore it is very reasonable to expect to meet with some footsteps of this discovery, some *hieroglyphical* representation, in which it was to be recorded.

We see the making of molten and graven *Idols*, re-

representations of things in the heavens or in the earth, to be worshipped and served as gods, was a practice as extensive, as it was offensive, in the most early times, to the Deity ; and, as nothing could in itself, and considered literally, be more absurd, and less deducible from, and consistent with nature and reason, than to make any bodily representation of the Deity, and to serve and worship that figure as divine, it may be pretty securely concluded, that, great as the abuse was, it was not altogether human invention, but, probably, a notorious abuse, from the wantonness of *Imagination*, of some laudable, sacred INSTITUTION.

The practice is bitterly censured, and, under the most severe penalties, prohibited, in *the Law of Moses*. No representation at all was to be made of *Jehovah*, nor was there any *Image* of HIM to be met with in the tabernacle, or temple, to whom the people should bow down ; contrary to the practice of all the heathen nations.

Yet, nevertheless, both in the tabernacle and temple there were *hieroglyphical* or *emblematical Figures* set up over the *Mercy-Seat*, called CHERUBIM ; and between, or in them, the Deity was to dwell, or reside ; and to his *Presence*, in that place, the blood was to be brought in within the *Vail*, on the day of *Expiation*.

Though the form of these *Cherubim* was so well known in the days of *Moses*, that, without any other description of them but the name, the workmen being commanded made them ; yet the knowledge of the figure they were of, was so little enquired after by the *Jews*, when they revolted from God, and receded from the purity of their religion, that they seemed totally to have lost it before they built the second temple. For it appears evidently that they had no *Cherubim* there, from these circumstances : That *Philo* knew nothing of their form ; that *Josephus*, the learned and inquisitive priest, who lived under the second temple, and had proper occasion to have known something about them, had any appearance of them been there, owns the ignorance of himself and of his nation, acknowledging they knew nothing about them, but that they were *Images* of some sort of *winged Animals* :

malis: and the conclusion from this last observation, and from the utter silence of the *Jews*, since the days of Christ, on that subject, is certain; unless one will chuse to suppose that *Josephus*, and the other later *Jews*, dissembled, and concealed their knowledge, lest some advantage might from thence have arisen to the Christians; which is not probable, because the Christians had not become, so early, so much the object of the *Jews* jealousy and aversion, as afterwards they were.

These *Cherubim* were to be beaten out of the same piece of gold that covered the *Ark of the Testimony*, called the *Mercy-Seat*; they were to look inwards towards the *Mercy-Seat*; the blood, on the day of *Expiation*, was to be sprinkled on the *Mercy-Seat*, between them; *Jehovah* was to dwell, to reside, between, or in them; from thence he was to give directions, and responses; and these figures, with the *Mercy-Seat* and the *Ark*, was all the furniture of the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the most holy place, the emblem of the divine residence.

As this was the most holy place, and these figures, made out of the *Propitiatorium*, the *Mercy-Seat*, were the most sacred Emblems, it cannot be doubted they were of very high significance, by any person who knows that the whole knowledge of early times was delivered and recorded in symbols and hieroglyphical representations, and who collects that every other branch of the *Jewish* institution was emblematical.

And if these emblems, rightly understood, conveyed knowledge, and directed the sentiments and the service of the ancient *Israelites*, whose chief joy was meditation on the Law of God, under the first temple; we cannot help lamenting the misfortune of the *Jews*, under the second, who surely had lost all the benefits the information by those symbols could give; and who, certainly, could not bring in the blood on the day of *Expiation* within the *Vail*, and sprinkle it according to the first directions of the Law.

If the loss of the knowledge of those Emblems had been fortuitous, occasioned only by the length of time, between the destruction of the first, and the building of the second temple, in which all those that knew the form of these

Emblems,

Emblems, in the first, had perished, the *Jews* case would be much to be pitied ; but it is by so much the less a proper object of compassion, that abundance of circumstances shew the loss was owing to their own gross fault, and perverseness ; which justifies the judgment of *Blindness* the Deity has been pleased, in pursuance of many denunciations, and even of the COVENANT solemnly entered into by their fathers, to execute against them.

The first Temple was destroyed, and the people carried away, because of their rebellion against *Jehovah*, and their running after the false gods of the nations ; and it seems pretty certain, that those who forsook *Jehovah*, entirely, would very little mind, or meditate on the sense of the *symbols*, or service instituted by him ; and if any of them returned to their land, it is not very likely they would be solicitous about what they knew nothing of.

It is surprisingly remarkable, that, from the promulgation of the *Law* on *Sinai*, till the destruction of *Jerusalem* with the first temple, the depraved turn of the *Jews*, who followed their own imaginations, was to *Polytheism*, quitting *Jehovah* for the foolish gods of the nations ; and that, contrary to the clearest evidence, though they had amongst them the *ARK* of *Jehovah*, the whole ornaments and liturgy of the Temple, the fire of God burning on their altar, the *EPHOD* with *URIM* to direct them, the Prophets inspired to instruct them, and the interposition of frequent miracles, to prove *Jehovah* the only, the true God.

And it is equally remarkable, that, after their return from the captivity, when all these extraordinary pieces of evidence failed, notwithstanding their many faults and follies, they never once nationally swerved from *Jehovah* to the service of the gods of the nations ; but, by guarding against that error, and the faulty effects of encouraging *Imagination*, they ran into the contrary extreme ; because of the *UNITY* of *Jehovah*, they were unwilling to think of the *PLURALITY* of *Elohim* ; and, lest *Imagination* should carry them too far, they would go no farther than the *Letter* of the *Law*, and the *Exterior* of *Institutions* and services ; which, considered purely in
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that light, signified nothing, or was apt to mislead; neglecting the precept so often inculcated, and so carefully practised by the godly, to *observe*, to *meditate* on the *Law*, and thereby to discover, and comfort themselves with the merciful and beneficent meaning of it. This turn of mind lost the knowledge of the *Cherubim*, it prevented their seeing the *Messias* in *Jesus*.

As the *Cherubim* are not fully described in the history of the framing and building of the tabernacle, or temple; and as the Priests, who might have seen them in the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, and the other persons, who must have seen them on the walls and doors of the temple, might have failed, before the second temple was completely finished, which would have furnished an excuse to the succeeding *Jews* for being without those emblems in the second temple, and for neglecting the knowledge thereby conveyed, it pleased God to exhibit to one of his prophets, *Ezekiel*, in vision, at different times, the figure of these *Emblems*, which he has in two several places, *chap.* 1. and 10. carefully recorded. And it is not a little surprising, that, though the *Jews* unanimously hold *Ezekiel* to be a prophet, and these passages to be inspired, yet they never thought fit to give the *Figures* he describes a place in their temple, or to guess at the meaning of them, though they hold that those visions contain the most important mystery.

The description of the CREATURES, seen in this vision by *Ezekiel*, is so full, and so anxiously, and laboriously given, that there is no mistaking some of the great lines of it. Each CHERUB had *four heads*, at least *faces*, and but one *body*; each had *hands* of a man, and *wings*: and the four faces were, first, the face of a *Bull*, which is properly called a *Cherub*; secondly, to the right of the *Bull*, the face of a *Man*; thirdly, to the right of man, the face of a *Lion*; and the faces of the *Man* and *Lion* are said, *chap.* 1. 10. to have been on the right side; whereas the face of the *Bull* is said to have been on the left side; and fourthly, the face of an *Eagle*, without taking notice of any particular conjunction between the face of the *Bull* and that of the *Eagle*.

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And the prophet takes so much care to inculcate that the *Creatures*, or *Figures*, thus represented, were the *CHERUBIM*, and that the descriptions in the *first* and the *tenth Chapters* relate to the same *Cherubim*, that there can be no doubt he describes the very *Cherubim* placed in the tabernacle and temple ; unless it can be supposed that this description was given, on set purpose, to deceive and mislead us.

Knowing thus, from *Ezekiel*, the form of the *Cherubim*, and knowing the usage of the most ancient nations, particularly the *Egyptians*, of framing compounded figures of this kind, for *hieroglyphical* or *symbolical* purposes, from the remains of their antiquities still extant, we can entertain no doubt that this representation was significative. He who cannot believe that the *Cherubim* was set in the *Holy of Holies* to represent *one* animal, compounded of *Bull, Man, Lion, and Eagle*, must necessarily admit that the faces of these animals, so joined, were intended to signify several characters, powers, or persons, united together in one.

The *Italian Janus* was *bifrons*, sometimes *quadrifrons* ; *Diana* was *triformis* ; many *Egyptian* monuments shew *two*, sometimes *three* heads of different creatures to *one* body ; in vast numbers of gems, particularly those called *Abraxa's* human bodies have the heads, sometimes of *dogs*, sometimes of *lions*, sometimes of *eagles* or *hawks*, &c. and no one can doubt that each of those representations was *symbolical*.

In considering this subject, we must recollect, that, though the building of the tabernacle was not so early as to give birth to those strange compositions over the heathen world, yet this *Figure* was exhibited, immediately, upon the expulsion of man from *Paradise* ; and was so well known, when *Israel* left *Egypt*, that the workman made the *Cherubim*, without any other direction than that of making them out of the gold that composed the *Mercy-seat*, and placing them on either end of it, looking towards the *Mercy-seat*, and stretching their *wings* over it. So that the *compound Figures* of the ancients, to

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represent their Deities, had no other original but *that* at the east end of the garden of *Eden*.

However the *Emblems*, or representations, of the heathen divinities may have been complicated of the forms of different animals, originally; yet we see, with length of time, they separated those *Symbols*; supposed the different *Figures* to be different *Deities*; and at last worshipped them *apart*.

The *Egyptian Apis*, the Bull, in imitation whereof the *Israelites* made their *golden Calf*, and *Jeroboam* made his *Calves*, was but one of those figures; and the deity called *Baal* amongst the *Syrians*, which is also called the *Heifer Baal*, was the same, and yet was the representation of the great God, the *LORD of all*.

The *Persian Mithras* was, in all the *Devices* of the servants of that god, pictured a *Lion*, or with a *Lion's head*; and the *Egyptian Sphinx*, which stood at the entry of their temples, had but two of the *cherubical figures*, joined in a strange manner, the head of the *Man* put on the body of the *Lion*.

The *Eagle* was to the *Greeks*, and *Romans*, an emblem sacred to *Jupiter* or *Jovis*, their great God, whom they pictured like a man. In the talons of this bird they put a thunderbolt, and this expression of thunder, proceeding from clouds, born by the *Eagle*, whose way in the air is among the clouds, was the ensign of *Nephtyus* *Zeo's*: and we know, from *Sanchoniathon*, that the *Tyrians* had a pillar sacred to *Wind*, or *Air* in motion, as well as they had to *Fire*, built, as they said, by *Ujous* the son of *Hypsouranias*, which *Fire* and *Wind* they worshipped as gods.

We know from ancient authors, and we see in ancient gems and other monuments, that the *Egyptians* were very much accustomed to make the body of their *Image*, or representation, *human*, sometimes with the head of a *Lion*, sometimes with that of a *Hawk*, or *Eagle*, and sometimes with that of a *Bull*, a *Ram*, or some other horned creature.

And as, from the original exhibition of the *Cherubim* renewed, and recalled to its proper use, in the tabernacle

and temple, we see the ancients had a pattern from whence they might have taken those representations, which they monstrously abused; we may reasonably conclude, that these representations which, naturally, and without some institution, would never have come into the heads of any men, flowed from an early practice, that had a different intent from that to which it was at last turned.

And, from the application made by the ancient *Pagans* of each of the figures in the *Cherubin*, to signify a different Deity, we may with reason conclude, that they understood *that* particular figure, in the *Cherubin*, which they chose for their protector or god, represented, in the *hieroglyphical* usage of the early times, the power, the thing, or person, that they intended to serve.

Thus, for example, if the curled hairs, and horns, in the *Bull's* head were, in *hieroglyphical* writing, made the emblem of *Fire* in general, or *Fire* at the orb of the *Sun*, those who took material fire for their deity, would set up that *Emblem*, and worship it.

If the *Lion's* piercing eyes, or any other consideration, brought that animal to be the emblem of *Light* in general, or of *Light* issuing from the body of the *Sun*, such as took *Light* for their god, if any such were, would set up the *Lion* for the *Emblem*.

And if the *Eagle's* soaring flight, and commerce thereby with the air, brought that bird to be the emblem of *Air*, such as imagined a divinity in the *Air*, in *Clouds*, in *Winds*, would take that bird to represent their deity.

And the *HUMAN FIGURE* in the *Cherubin* must, one should think, be the most natural occasion of that universal mistake which all the heathens, at length, dropped into, of picturing their gods with *human bodies*, and the very earliest gave some countenance to, in joining parts of the *human body* to, almost, all their representations of their gods.

Now, so it is, that we do know, from innumerable texts of Scripture, and from many passages in heathen historians, and *Mythologists*, that the objects of the earliest pagan adoration, after losing the idea of the true

God, were the *Powers* in the *Heavens*, that were supposed to maintain this system; the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, the *Host of Heaven*, the *Queen of Heaven*; *Fire*, which was supposed to be one of the chief agents, in supporting the motion of the universe; *Light*, issuing from *Fire*; and the *Air*, *Clouds*, *Winds*, &c. which had infinite force, and were supposed to act a very considerable part in the government and preservation of the material world.

In particular, we know, that *Fire* at the orb of the *Sun* was worshipped by the ancient *Egyptians*, who made use of *Apis*, the *Bull*, for their *Emblem*; and that the worshippers of *Baal*, the *Heifer*, believed their god had the command of *Fire*: for, in the remarkable contention between *Jehovah* and *Baal*, managed on the one side by *Elijah*, on the part of *Jehovah*, and on the other by four hundred and fifty *Priests*, on the part of *Baal*, the test of all was, which of their Deities could command *Fire* to come down from heaven to consume the sacrifice; and the issue disgraced *Baal*, and destroyed all his *Priests*. And therefore, it is no rash conclusion, that the *Ox's* or *Bull's* head, was the *hieroglyphical Emblem* of *Fire*, perhaps *Fire* at the orb of the *Sun*.

We know, also, that many of the *Egyptians* and of the neighbouring nations worshipped *Light*; it was difficult to separate the idea of light from that of fire. Those that served the moon and planets, had not fire for their object. The *Persians*, who worshipped fire, and eminently the body of the *Sun*, had *Light*, necessarily, in esteem, their beneficent principle. *Oromasdes* was *Light*. *Job* talked of worshipping *Light* as idolatry. There were several temples in *Egypt*, and in *Canaan*, to the *Light* of the *Sun*; and in *Egypt*, as well as in *Persia*, the *Lion* was a sacred *Emblem*. Wherefore, it seems highly probable the *Lion* was used as the *Symbol* or *Emblem* of *Light*, as the *Bull* was made use of as the *Emblem* of *Fire*.

We know, also, that the earliest heathens took the *Air*, *Wind*, that thing which in the ancient languages is expressed by a word signifying, promiscuously, *Wind* and *Spirit*, that invisible agent which we feel, and which performs

performs so many considerable effects in nature without being seen, for a Deity; that to it they ascribed inspiration; their *Sybil*s, their deliverers of Oracles were *inspired*; futurities, the will of their God was discovered, by the countenance of *Clouds*, and the *flight of Birds*, which were religiously observed by *Augurs*, in the *Hebrew*, *Cloud mongers*; Thunder was the voice of their God, which was portentous, and much observed; Thunder was ascribed to the great *Jous*, the *Thunderer*, and the *Eagle* with the thunderbolt was his ensign. Whence we may, pretty safely, conclude, that the *Eagle*, to the worshippers of the *Air*, represented, *hieroglyphically*, *Air*, *Wind*, *Spirit*.

If the Deity, to give some idea of himself from a sensible object, had made choice of the *Heavens* as the sensible object, from which to take the imperfect idea of his immensity, *personality*, and manner of existence and operation; if, by the vastness and extent of them, his immensity was to be represented; if, by *fire*, the *first Person*, necessarily and continually generating and sending forth *Light*, the *second Person*, and constantly and necessarily supplied by *Air*, or *Spirit*, the *third Person*, the *Trinity* coexisting, and co-operating, for the support of the whole, and in aid of each other, was to be represented: then, upon discovering this to mankind, the *Heavens* would become the type of *Jehovah*, the divine *Essence*; *Fire* would become the type of the *first Person*; *Light*, of the *second*; and *Air*, or *Spirit*, of the *third*: and whatever EMBLEMS, in *hieroglyphical* writing, were used to express these, as the *names* of the one, would, or might be used, for the appellations or *names* of the other.

So that, if this resemblance, or representation, were to be expressed in stone, wood, or metal, the emblems of *Fire*, *Light*, and *Air*, or *Spirit*, that is, from what has been said, the *Bull*, the *Lion*, and the *Eagle*, ought to be conjoined together into the form of *one animal*; and every body, who understood the *hieroglyphical* emblems, would immediately think on the *Heavens* which they represented, and, from thence, raise to himself the intended image of the *Trinity* in the divine *Essence*.

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Now we do know that the word *SHEMIM*, used always for the *Heavens*, in the sacred language which God has chosen to express his *Revelation* in, is plural, as the other word *ELOHIM* is; that its natural signification is *Names*; and that it has been often made use of to signify the Deity. And if the *Characters*, or *Powers*, in the *Heavens* have been chosen to point out, and express the *Persons* in the Deity, we can perceive the reason why the *Heavens* have got the appellation of *the Names*, by way of eminence, as they denote, or are descriptive of those *sacred Persons*.

And we do, further, know, that the first turn the ancient heathens took from the worship of the true, the invisible God, was to the worship of the *Heavens*, those *Names*; which can, pretty naturally, be accounted for, if they were accustomed to think on the *Powers*, or *Characters*, in the *Heavens* with any sacred regard, and to believe that they supported themselves, and all the rest of this system, by one unerring, perpetual action and reaction upon themselves, and on every thing else, in the material world.

This defection from the knowledge and service of the true God began as early as the project at *Babel*. The scheme, then, was, to build a tower or temple to the *Heavens*: and, though the design was then broken, by making the projectors fall out amongst themselves about the *LITURGY*, and form of *Worship*, which was confounding their language; yet it soon took place, in different families, and countries, tho' with different emblems, ceremonies, and services. *Abraham*, by the direction of God, left *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, where the rebellious service, probably to the *Light*, had begun; and was, as were his son, and grandchild, after him, for many years, kept under the immediate direction of God, itinerant in regions that were then but thinly peopled, and with the inhabitants whereof they had but small intercourse, to prevent the infection that might have come from communication with idolaters; and, by the immediate act of providence, his race was brought down to *Egypt*, and exceedingly multiplied there, under particular man

manners, and institutions, that kept them distinct from the people of that great empire; which, as it was one of the first mighty monarchies, so was confessedly the most noted for the learning, and superstitious profession, of the pagan religion; and chosen therefore by the Deity as the scene in which his wonders were to be wrought, for the confusion of idolatrous *imagination*, and for establishing the authority of himself, his Lawgiver, and consequently his *Laws*, with the *Israelitish* people.

As substituting the visible similitude in the room of the invisible God was the first, it was the most criminal, the most dangerous abuse that ever crept into religion; and therefore the strongest, the most laborious efforts, if one may be allowed to say so, were made by the Deity to correct, and prevent it; and to set men right in that particular. *Reasonings* of any kind, could not have had the same weight to convince the idolatrous *Egyptians*, or the *Israelites*, who might have imbibed some of their notions, that the *Heavens*, and in them the *Fire*, the *Light*, the *Air*, or *Spirit*, were no real Gods, and were but servants of *Jehovah*, their maker; as the repeated miracles wrought by *Moses*, the servant of *Jehovah*, in the sight of both nations; giving animal life to inanimate matter; turning rods into serpents; producing multitudes of frogs; turning water into blood; turning light into darkness; making the air produce swarms of noxious insects; inflicting diseases, and death, on certain classes, whilst others were safe; dividing the sea; commanding fire, and cloud, to execute his command, &c. miracles which were, to all intents, sufficient to convince the *Egyptians* of their error, and to guard *Israel* against falling into it.

And, accordingly, we see the point, principally, laboured in the writings left by *Moses*, is asserting to *Jehovah* the power, pre-eminence, and dominion, attributed by the pagans to the *Heavens*. Hence his books begin with the creation, and formation of those *Heavens* by the word of God; the history of the destruction of the earth, by the flood is minutely recorded; the constant claim of the Deity is to be confessed as the Creator of the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, and the giver of all the good things that
were

were supposed to come, immediately, from them. The chief view of the *Law* of the *two Tables*, is to deny service to all beings but *Jehovah*; the professions of the faithful were, *that Jehovah made the Heavens*; was the sovereign Lord and Master; and in those professions, the miracles in *Egypt*, &c. are referred to, as the foundation of their belief and acknowledgment.

It calls for very particular attention, that the first, and the grand mistakes in religion proceeded from taking *literally*, what was meant *figuratively*, or emblematically only; and so denying, in effect, the *symbolical* meaning; from which several impious absurdities followed, terminating in absolute infidelity, where some sort of impertinent belief was not maintained by extravagant *imaginations*.

The ridicule of this mistake appears very strong, in taking *symbolical* representations for the *Realities* intended to be represented; whatever pretence a *Revelation*, recorded in words by writing, might have to be so, *literally*, understood, sure it was extremely perverse, to take *pictures* only, for the *original* things or persons designed to be exhibited by the *pictures*.

And yet this folly we see mankind fell into almost in every particular. The *Ebhim* were represented by the *Heavens*, and these, again, in *Scripture*, or *Picture*, by the *Bull*, the *Lion*, and the *Eagle* joined. The first who wandered from the truth, mistook the *Heavens*, *Fire*, *Light*, and *Air*, or *Spirit*, for what they were intended to represent, the invisible *Trinity*; and as such worshipped them, using the figures of the *Bull*, the *Lion*, the *Eagle*, only as *hieroglyphical* representations of those *Powers*, which they truly were intended to be. But their successors, in process of time, forgetting the supposed influence of those *Powers* in the *Air*, or *Heavens*, and observing religious service paid to the forms of those *animals*, made a second mistake; looked no more to the *Heavens*, as their Gods, but stupidly imagined a Deity to be inherent in those graven or molten *images* which they worshipped and served, and from whom they looked for favour, and protection; and, when those things be-

became too absurd to be credited, and formally defended, *Imagination* was set to work, and produced such ridiculous systems in respect to the Deity, as endangered the losing of the knowledge, even, of the *original Symbols*, and helped to introduce total Unbelief and *Atheism*.

It was taking *Symbols* for *Realities*, that made men imagine a purifying quality in the blood of beasts; that made them fancy that *Hecatombs* slaughtered placated the Deity; and that God was delighted with the smoke that arose from the fat of burnt-offerings.

It was laying hold of the *letter*, and letting the meaning slip, that induced men to sacrifice their *first-born*, and to shed in sacrifice human blood: the blood of the *first-born* was to atone; the *seed of the woman* was to relieve mankind from misery; the first-born were sacred to God. Zealots to the *letter*, imagined the *fruit*, at least the *first-fruit*, of the womb had this virtue; and therefore offered it, *literally*, to their gods, which, at last, made human sacrifice fashionable.

In short, looking at the external symbols, and *letter*, and not at the apparent, certain meaning of both, drove the heathens to all their follies; and first misled, and afterwards hardened and confirmed the *Jews* in those absurdities, under which they are ridiculous, and miserable, to this day.

As the practice of the earliest heathens, who first apostatised to the service of the *Heavens*, in setting up the figures of the several *animals*, whereof the *Cherubim* was composed, for the symbols, or emblems, of the different *Powers* in the *Heavens*, which they worshipped, is strong evidence what those *figures* were, originally, intended to represent; it becomes necessary for any one, who would have further satisfaction in this particular, to search the scriptures, to see whether, in the several appearances of the Deity therein related, there may not be some characters fit to confirm, or destroy the opinion that the *figures* in the *Cherubim* were the emblems of *fire*, *light*, and *air*, or *spirit*.

And, upon due enquiry, it will be found, that, almost, always when the manner of *Jehovah's* appearance

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is described, the visible *symbol* of his *presence* was *fire*, or *light*, or *air*, or all three together: not to mention that the appearance of *fire* is generally, and, almost, necessarily attended with that of *light*.

The first appearance described is *Gen. xv.* where, to confirm the *covenant* to *Abram*, the parts of the divided beasts, and the fowls, being set over against each other, the appearance of a smoking furnace, and a lamp of *fire* passed between them. That this appearance contained *fire*, *light*, and *air*, or *spirit*, is evident.

The second appearance of which the form is mentioned, was under the oaks of *Mamre*, *Gen. xviii.* where the figure is not particularly described, though probably it was human, or like to it; and all we can gather from this, is, that the appearance was under the form of *three Persons*.

The next appearance described is that to *Moses*, in the bush, *Exod. iii.* what was exhibited to view, was burning bush which was not consumed; and this exhibition could not possibly be without *light*; whether it was attended with cloud, or smoke, the text does not say.

The next emblem of the *presence* of God, described, the pillar of *fire*, and *cloud*, that guided and guarded the *Israelites* in the wilderness; if *light* be allowed to the *fire*, in this exhibition, all the three are joined.

Immediately after this we see *Jehovah* giving the Law solemnly, from *Sinai*. He is said, *Exod. xix. 18.* *have descended upon it in fire*: Mount *Sinai* was altogether on a smoke; it was covered with a thick cloud, and there were on it thunders and lightnings; and *Moses* takes notice, *Deut. iv. 15.* in cautioning the *Israelites* against graven images, and the making the similitude of any creatures, to be worshipped as God, that on that day that *Jehovah* spoke to them in *Horeb*, out of midst of the *fire*, they saw no manner of *similitude*: which, the text shews, must be meant the similitude of any animal; besides, that it is certain there must have been the appearance of *fire*, and *light* from it, as well from the lightning, and the *cloud*, which, naturally, notes *air*, or *spirit*, whose peculiar language thunders.

When the tabernacle of the congregation was removed, and pitched without the camp, upon the people's rebellion whilst *Moses* tarried yet in *Horeb*, the pillar of *Cloud* descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, so often as the Lord talked with *Moses*; and all the people, upon seeing this cloud, worshipped. *Exod.* xxxiii. 9, 10.

When *Moses* desired to see the way of the Lord, and *Jehovah* was to proclaim his name, he caused his glory to pass by him, *Exod.* xxxiii. 22. Now, if this glory of the Lord was of the same kind with that which filled the tabernacle, and temple, on many occasions, and which *Ezekiel*, in his account of the *Cherubim*, describes, it must have consisted of fire, light, and air, or spirit.

When the tabernacle was set up, *Exod.* xl. 34, 35. the cloud of the Lord covered the tent, and the glory of *Jehovah* filled the tabernacle. When *Aaron* blessed the people, for the first time, upon entering upon his office, *Levit.* ix. 23. the glory of *Jehovah* appeared to all the people. When the temple was completed, and the sacred musick had played, *1 Kings* viii. 10, 11. and *Chron.* v. 13, 14. the cloud filled the house of *Jehovah*, so that the Priests could not stand to minister, by reason of the cloud: for the glory of *Jehovah* had filled the house of *Jehovah*. And, *2 Chron.* vii. 2. when *Solomon* had done praying, at the dedication of the temple, the glory of the Lord filled the house. And the Priests could not enter into the house of *Jehovah*, because the glory of *Jehovah* had filled *Jehovah's* house.

Now, if we examine what appearance this glory of *Jehovah* had, when he was, as one may say, in person taking possession of his house, and can with certainty discover it, we may with confidence conclude, that the sensible image it bore, was what God intended should give the idea of the material thing, to which he, whose presence that appearance denoted, was to be assimilated.

The common notion of glory has splendor, a glare of light attending it; and, when brought into sculpture, or painting, is figured like rays issuing from the sun; and,

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and, in the passages above mentioned, a *cloud*, another *emblem*, was attendant.

In *Ezekiel*, chap. 1. where the *Cberub* is described, the *glory of Jehovah* is also strongly painted. The vision begins with a *whirlwind*, a *great cloud*, v. 4. and a *fire* infolding itself. v. 13. *As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures, and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.* v. 26, 27, 28. The appearance of a *Man*, on the appearance of a throne; and the prophet saw, *as the colour of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it: from the appearance of his loyns even upward, and from the appearance of his loyns even downward, he saw as it were the appearance of fire; and it had brightness round about.* *As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.* This, says the prophet, *was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord: and, when he saw it, he fell down upon his face.* And chap. 10. v. 4. where the same *Cberubim* are described, the court is said to have been full of the brightness of *Jehovah's* glory, whilst the house was filled with the cloud.

This description shews that *fire*, *light*, and *cloud*, were the principal, if not the only ingredients in the appearance of the *glory of Jehovah*; and the preternatural appearance of *light*, shining from the skin of *Moses's* face, after the *glory of Jehovah* had passed by him, shews, pretty well, what share *light* had in the composition of that *glory*; which the *Apostle Paul* seems to have understood, when writing to the *Hebrews*, chap. 1. he speaks of the brightness of the *Father's* glory, the express image of his Person.

Besides these appearances of the *glory of the Lord, Jehovah* acts in character, when, *Levit.* ix. 23, 24. pleased with the priesthood of *Aaron*, he sends *fire*, the emblem of himself, out from his face, to burn the sacrifice on the altar; when, *2 Chron.* vii. 1. *fire*, upon the ending of *Solomon's* prayer, came down from heaven, and

and consumed the burnt-offering; and when, 1 Kings xviii. 38. the decision was made, as above mentioned, between *Jehovah* and *Baal*, by fire from heaven.

These being, perpetually, the signals of *Jehovah's* presence, the symbols made use of to denote his appearance; these having been, jointly, or severally, the objects of the earliest pagans religious services, the pagans acknowledging the *bull*, the *lion*, and the *eagle*, as the emblems of these their divinities, which, in length of time, they mistook for what they were intended only to represent; and the *bull*, the *lion*, and the *eagle*, joined in the appearance of one living creature, having been consecrated, as one may say, in the *Cherubim*, for the residence of the presence of God in the *Holy of Holies*, one can hardly doubt that the figures, joined in the *Cherubim*, which were the emblems of fire, light, and air, or spirit, the ordinary similitude under which the Deity usually appeared, were intended to represent those characters, or persons, in the divine Essence, that fire, light, and air, or spirit, resembled.

Whatever occasion man might have had for the knowledge of the distinction of persons in the Deity, before the FALL; yet it seems certain, the manner of his salvation, after his defection, could not have been imparted to him without revealing that truth, undiscoverable by the light of nature. He could not possibly know, how, or upon what account, his sins were to be pardoned, and himself reinstated in the favour of God, without being told, that the Deity consists of three Persons; that of those three, pursuant to a covenant made before the CREATION, the second was to take on him flesh, and in the form of man to suffer, and thereby atone for the sins of mankind; and that the third was to keep a communication with the souls of men, for their guidance and comfort. And man could not possibly keep up, with any certainty, the memory of this Revelation, without some memorial, some symbolical act, or thing, to preserve it; or look upon such symbol, knowing the sense of it, without gratefully confessing his obligations to those divine Persons, to whom he owed his being, his comfort, his salvation.

A Christian, the most important article of whose Creed

it is, that the Deity was joined to the humanity, that the *Word* was made flesh, that a *Person* in *Jehovah* became the *Son of Man*, and a *Man*, born of a *Virgin*, became the *Son of Jehovah*, will not scruple when he is told, that, in the representation of the Deity exhibited under *symbols* in the *Cherubim*, for the instruction and comfort of mankind, the figure of a *Man* is added to those that represent the *Trinity*; that this figure of a *Man* is placed at the right hand of that *emblem* that represents the *Father*, the *first Person*, the *Fire*; and that it is, in a particular manner, conjoined with the *Lion*, the *second Person*, the *Light*. He firmly believes what these *figures*, thus explained, represent; and must think it agreeable to the great condescension, and goodness of the merciful God, to acquaint man, from the beginning, with what so nearly concerned him, and what, without *Revelation*, he could possibly have no idea of.

The *hieroglyphical* representation in the *Cherubim* must not be considered, singly, from the form of it; but to that must be added the rank it had in the tabernacle, and the ceremony, or *emblematical* action in which it was concerned.

It has been already observed, that the *Cherubim* were to be made out of the same pure gold that composed the *mercy-seat*, which they were to cover with their wings; and all that is described to us, further, of their posture, is, that, standing one at each end of the *mercy-seat*, their faces were to look towards each other, and towards the *mercy-seat*.

This *mercy-seat*, the space between the two *Cherubim*, is described, particularly, as the place of the residence of the Deity, and of his appearance; he was to inhabit the *Cherubim*, or between them; and he was to appear, there, in the *cloud*, and to declare his will from thence.

Besides this, there was a stated solemn ceremony to be performed, once a-year, on the day of *Expiation*, before the *mercy-seat*: the *Priest* was to bring within the *vail* the blood of the *sin-offering*, and with it to make atonement for all the people, by sprinkling of the blood upon the

the *mercy-seat*, and seven times before it; and this blood, so sprinkled, is said to expiate.

The *atonement blood*, in this highest act of the *Mosaical* institution, was sprinkled on that place, the *mercy-seat*, towards which the several faces of the *Cherubim* were turned: and, if they were to see, they had no object to look at, on this solemn day of *expiation*, but the *Priest* in the holy garment, the *emblem* of the *second Person*, the *Light*, sprinkling this blood on, and towards, the *mercy-seat*; which could hardly fail to raise the idea, that the blood, so sprinkled, was the object, the divine *Persons*, whom these *figures* represented, looked upon as the propitiation, the ransom, the atonement.

And, if it was necessary, towards making this *emblem* compleat, to represent all the *Persons* as looking upon, and accepting this blood, then it became necessary to make two several *Cherubs*, and to place them at different ends of the *mercy-seat*, that the face of each *figure* might be turned towards the spot the blood was to be sprinkled on; because, had there been no more than one *Cherub*, two only of the four faces could have been directed to the place on which the blood was to be sprinkled; besides that the significancy of the circumstance of their faces looking towards each other, which deserves a separate consideration, would have been lost.

Nothing is more certain, than that, under the *Mosaick* oeconomy, the Deity was to reside, to dwell, to appear, in the midst of the people, in the place where he was to put his *Name*; the place where, and where only, in exclusion of all others, sacrifice was to be offered, the altar was to be set up, and every other ceremonial, or emblematical act of their religion was to be performed, and more particularly the highest, in, or between the *Cherubim*.

Whatever religious act was done, in this place, is said to be done *before Jehovah*; in the *Hebrew*, always, *before the faces of Jehovah*.

Now, if the several faces of the *Cherubim* are taken to represent the *Persons* in the Deity, and therefore to be

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called *the faces of Jehovah*, the reason of this phraseology will be obvious, as the phrase itself will be significant.

It is not to be dissembled, that the *Hebrew* words, translated *before the faces*, are often made use of to signify *before*, or *in presence of*, without regard to plurality of faces; but it deserves enquiry, how so strange a phraseology came to take place.

And it seems to call for very particular attention, that, before the *Mosaick* institution, and, indeed, from the first *Revelation*, the presence of the Deity is represented as confined, with respect to religious acts, to a place, and what is done, in that place, is said to be done *before the faces of Jehovah*.

Cain is said to have gone out from *the faces of Jehovah*, and to have dwelt in the land of *Nod*, to the eastward of *Eden*. Now, if by *the faces of Jehovah* is not meant some particular place of his immediate presence, and if, on the contrary, his presence, as we translate it, in general, is understood, the thing will not be true: *Cain* could not convey himself out of the presence of God, which is every where; but he might remove from *that place* which he chose, in a particular manner, for his residence, in the celebration of religious acts.

In like manner, *the pot of manna*, *Exod. xvi.* is ordered to be laid up, and was accordingly laid up, *before the faces of Jehovah*, before the *Testimony*, long before the *Mosaick* tabernacle and ark was made, or erected. Laying it up any where, would, in one sense, have been laying it up *before the Lord*; but *Aaron* understood the meaning of the expression to be, to lay it up before the *Testimony*, where the faces of the *Cherubim* were.

Nor need any one scruple admitting the force of this last observation; for it is evident from this, as well as other texts, that the *Israelites* had an *ark*, and a *tabernacle*, consecrated to the residence of *Jehovah*, and destined to religious service, before the *Mosaick tabernacle* was reared up.

Upon the provocation of the *Israelites*, in making the golden calf, *Jehovah* being highly displeased, the *tabernacle* was by *Moses* taken out of the center, and removed far

far from the camp, and was called *the tabernacle of the congregation*, where *Jehovah* descended in a cloud, to give directions to *Moses*. Now this happened, in the interval, between *Moses's* receiving instructions for building the *tabernacle* that was made in the wilderness, and his giving orders for the contribution for that work; which evinces that the *Israelites* had, upon their going out of *Egypt*, a tabernacle for *Jehovah*, distinguished by his presence, and the symbols of it, before that reared by *Moses* was prepared.

Though the having a tabernacle for *Jehovah*, sufficiently implies the having an *ark*, with the *mercy-seat* and *cherubim*, the furniture of it; yet there is other evidence to shew that the *Israelites* actually had an *ark*, different from that made by *Moses*. For when the *ark*, which had been taken by the *Philistines*, was locally at *Kirjath-jearim*, *Saul*, being at *Gibeah of Benjamin*, 1 Sam. xiv. 18. orders *Abijah* to bring him thither the *ark* of God; and the penman of that book adds a remark, for at that time there was an *ark* of God, besides that, with the children of *Israel*. And when the *ark* made by *Moses*, after having been carried from *Kirjath-jearim*, was lodged in *Zion*, *Uriah*, who had left *Joab* at the siege of *Rabbah*, being pressed to go to his house and to his wife, excuses himself, alledging it was not proper for him to take so much ease, when the *Ark*, and *Israel*, and *Judah* abode in tents, and *Joab*, and the King's servants were encamped in the open fields, 2 Sam. xi. 11.

And it seems highly probable, that the *Ark* thus brought to *Saul* when in camp, and the *Ark* that was with *Joab* at the siege of *Rabbah*, was the same that belonged to the tabernacle which the *Israelites* carried from *Egypt* with them; because, after the building of *Moses's* tabernacle, it was unlawful to have made any new one in imitation of it.

If it is asked, whence the *Israelites* had an *ark*, a tabernacle, *Cherubim*, and the presence, or the supposed presence, of *Jehovah*, in, or between, those *Cherubim*? toward the resolution of that question, it must be considered, whence the ancient nations had their *Cists*, their *Arks*, their *Images*, their *Teraphim*, their *Tabernacles*,

their *Temples*; because the origin of both will, very probably, be found the same.

The account, given us by *Moses*, of the publication of the *Gospel*, after the *Fall*, is very short, and concise, though the *Revelation* may, in itself, have been very full and explicit. Hopes of mercy given are recorded in that single sentence, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*: and we hear of no other *symbolical* thing, institution, or exhibition, except only the placing, or inhabiting, the *Cherubim*, to the eastward of *Eden*, upon man's being removed out of it.

The *Jews*, who have misconstrued the *Angel Jehowah* into a created angel, have thought fit, here, to understand, by the *Cherubims*, two of the same sort of Angels, who had got a flaming sword, amongst them, to frighten *Adam* from re-entering *Eden*, and meddling with the fruit of the *tree of life*; and this monstrous story they have made out of a text that, necessarily, means no such thing, and may fairly be construed to a sense big with the most important information to mankind.

For, in the first place, what the *Jews* and we translate *to keep the way of the tree of life*, with intent to prevent the coming at it, may as properly be rendered *to observe*, or *for observing*, and so discovering, or finding out, *the way to the tree of life*; and every body knows that the word *way of heaven*, *way to life*, in the *Greek*, as well as *Hebrew* learning, means to arrive at happiness.

In the next place, what we commonly translate *flaming sword* stands in two several *Nouns*, not joined by construction, *flame* and *sword*, which last means nothing more particular than a killing weapon.

And, in the last place, the word we translate *placed Cherubims*, is, almost always, in every other text translated *inhabited*; and whether you translate it *placed*, or *inhabited*, the next word ought to be translated *the Cherubims*, as things or emblems well known to those for whom *Moses* wrote. So that *Jehowah's* placing or inhabiting these *Cherubims*, where there was also the appearance of fire and sword, was the method, chosen by him, to make *the way to the tree of life kept*, or *observed*.

Now,

Now, as the established method for atonement and propitiation, the known way to the tree of life, was, by employing fire in burnt-sacrifice, and the sword in shedding blood, both which must be done before the faces of *Jehovah*, residing in or between the *Cherubim*; what hinders us to conclude, that the exhibition mentioned by *Moses* was, to the *symbolical* institution and service afterwards established amongst men, the same that the patterns shewed to *Moses* and to *David* were of the tabernacle and temple that afterwards were erected; and that *Adam*, and in him mankind, was thereby instructed to shed Blood, and offer burnt-sacrifice, before the faces of such *symbolical* figures as were then represented? Surely, if the shedding of blood, and offering by fire, were then instituted, as we are pretty sure they were, the manner would also be directed. And, as we know, from the history of *Cain*, that *Jehovah* chose a place for his more immediate presence, called his faces, we cannot possibly doubt that directions must be given with what symbols that place was to be adorned, and how it was to be distinguished: nor can we reasonably hesitate to pronounce that the symbol of his presence was the *Cherubim*, the place where, in the *Jewish* œconomy, he most certainly dwelt, and where, in the very text in question, he is said to inhabit.

If then this *emblematical* representation was exhibited, immediately after the *Fall*, to express and keep in perpetual memory the *Revelation* of mercy to man, by the blood and suffering of that perfect human sacrifice, who was to be joined to the *second Person* in the Deity, and to redeem and govern those that served, and trusted in him, we can clearly see the extent of God's goodness from the beginning, universally, to all mankind; and we can perceive how the *Jews* came to have a tabernacle, and an ark, with proper emblems, before that made by *Moses*; and how the *Nations* came by their symbols, of the like nature; which in process of time they mistook, misapplied, and altered, when their corruption and imagination had once led them astray.

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For if, in that *emblematical* service, the *symbol* of the *presence* of the Deity was necessary, towards performing sacrifice, as well as *the emblem* of the great sacrifice, the great *intercessor*, &c. then it became necessary for men, when, by multiplying, they were forced to extend their quarters, and to people distant regions, to carry some *symbol* of the divine *presence* along with them, in order to the sacrificing acceptably; every nation, agreeing in the same service, must have one; and every family, so long as the right of exercising the priesthood remained with the first-born, must also have one, else that right would be of no benefit: and if they lived in the itinerant, *No-made* way, they must have a tent, or tabernacle, for placing those *symbols* in, as well as means of transporting them; as, on the other hand, if their seats were fixed, so as to suffer them to erect houses for themselves, they naturally would find houses, temples, for those *symbols*.

Nothing was more common than *Household-Gods* among the ancients. *Laban* had his *Teraphim*, which he calls his Gods, and about which he was extremely solicitous; *Rachel* had no less respect for them than he. The Heathens carried their Gods along with them, whithersoever they went. The idolatrous *Israelites* had, probably, in the wilderness tabernacles for their Gods *Chium* and *Remphan*. The cause of making the golden Calf was, probably, compliance with this custom. *Aeneas* is commended for the pious care of carrying his Gods, his *Dii Penates*, from *Troy* to *Italy*; though what the form of them was, is not known. Every family had their *Penates*, their *Dii Lares*, though in later times they forgot what form these anciently were of. *Teraphim*, *Penates*, *Lares*, are all plural names for the representations of those *Family-Gods*; and, laying those circumstances together, it is impossible to doubt that the making these representations, amongst the different nations and kindreds, owed its origin to one and the same cause.

It was because of the many corruptions introduced into the sacred service, in practice as well as in opinion, that the *Jewish* oeconomy was instituted; and it was because

cause the permission of every head of a family to be Priest, for his own house, and to sacrifice according to his own will, had introduced the greatest uncertainty, as well as error, that the first act towards establishing the Jewish liturgy was, the abrogating that right, the depriving the *first-born* of all pretence to shed blood, and transferring that right to the family of *Aaron*.

It was for the same reason, and to the same intent, that sacrifice of all sorts was prohibited, except before the faces of *Jehovah*, in the tabernacle first, and then in the temple. In the wilderness no *Israelite* could lawfully kill a clean animal, for private use, in any other place, except before the tabernacle: and though, when the people had fixed seats in the land of *Canaan*, distant from the faces of *Jehovah*, they were permitted to kill of the flocks, or of the herds, for domestick use, provided they did not eat the blood or the fat; yet still, under the strictest menaces, they were prohibited to sacrifice, for fear of the abuses that might ensue.

The very prohibition, together with substituting the *Levites* in place of the *first-born*, and the change that was thereby introduced in the precedent practice, which all mankind but the *Jews* continued in, shews sufficiently what was lawful and regular before that prohibition; and the circumstances, above taken notice of, sufficiently shew the occasion and meaning of it.

Much of the same kind, and nearly for the same reason, is the prohibition to make *graven* or *mollen images* to represent *Jehovah*, to fall down before them, or worship them; to erect altars, statues, or pillars, for religious service. *Abraham*, &c. built altars; *Jacob* anointed a stone, which he had set up, and called it *Beth-el*; and doubtless the practice of both was laudable, and, but for the prohibition in the institution given by *Moses*, each might have been lawfully practised by the *Israelites* in *Canaan*, as well as their sacrificing before the faces of *Jehovah* might have been imitated. But, after all religious service, the whole *symbolical* representation of the grace of God to mankind was confined to the tabernacle and temple, then what was lawful to be done elsewhere, became un-

unlawful; and, as it was thus impossible, after that period, to sacrifice any where but *before the faces of Jehovab*, the symbols of his presence, in the holy place, it became unfit to make, or to have in reverence, those symbols (which were only expressive, as they were joined with sacrifice) any where else, except when a Prophet had immediate direction, or in cases of necessity.

The prohibition, then, is to *Israel*, that they should not make unto themselves *graven images*, the *similitudes* of any thing in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, &c.; that they should not bow down to them, nor serve them; that they should not take upon themselves, wantonly, to assimilate God to what their *imaginations* might suggest to them he was like, by the practice whereof mankind had already run into so many ridiculous, and miserable errors. But this prohibition does not, in any degree, imply, that the Deity might not continue the use of the sacred symbol of his personality and grace, in the merciful act of redeeming mankind, in the *Holy of Holies*; no more than the inhibition to sacrifice, at large, prevented sacrificing in the temple. And, if it be said, that the actual institution of sacrifice, at the altar, shews the prohibition to sacrifice was not absolute, it may also be said, that the command to frame the *Cheerubim* is as express as that to burn *Holocausts* at the altar.

It is, indeed, true, that the prohibition extends to prohibit all religious *worship*, even to the sacred *emblems* in the holy place; an extravagance into which the idolaters had fallen; and that may be a main motive for forbidding the very making, or having, such *emblems* in private hands. But then there was no danger of that abuse in the temple: The symbols were placed there, not as the objects of *worship*, but as descriptive, in some degree, of the manner of the act of grace, as it was to be brought about by the persons in the Deity, for mankind. The presence, that was to be worshipped, was to be looked for between those symbols, or emblems, upon the *mercy-seat*; and the cloud, and the glory issuing from it, called away the attention from those representations. Besides that, to prevent abuses from *imagination*, and all attempts of *worshipping*, these sacred,
figures

figures were kept in the innermost part of the tabernacle, and temple, to be approached only once a-year, and that by the *High-Priest*, on the day of *expiation*.

That this was the apprehension of the *Israelites*, of those times, is evident from the conduct of their successors, who could not well fail to be acquainted with their notions; and who might think, that ordinances of this kind, intended to take place in a state of quiet and tranquillity, when all the people had free access to the tabernacle, or temple, might be superseded, in case of absolute necessity, when the pious could not have access to present themselves at those places.

Micab, who lived in the time of the *Judges*, certainly feared *Jehovah*: the silver, belonging to his mother, was dedicated to *Jehovah*, to make an *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, &c. when he succeeded in getting a *Priest* to his mind, he concluded that he was certain *Jehovah* would do him good; and this *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, evidently were prophetick.

His scheme, then, manifestly was not to revolt from *Jehovah*, nor to serve idols, or other Gods; but, whilst the confusion and oppression of *Israel* made it impossible to attend at *Shilo*, to have a house of God in his own family, with sacred symbols, and a *Priest*, who, before the faces of *Jehovah*, in that place could make atonement by sacrifice, whilst communication with *Shilo* was obstructed.

He, therefore, made an *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, in imitation of the approved symbols; and, having them set up, had, *Judg. xvii. 5.* *Beth-Elohim*, a house of God. The Translators, imagining that the *Teraphim* represented false gods, have rendered the words *Beth-Elohim* a house of gods; though, *chap. xviii. 31.* they render the very same words, when applied to the tabernacle in *Shilo*, the house of God.

As the service, for which this *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, this house of God, was intended, could not be performed without a *Priest*, *Micab*, who it seems was not himself a first-born, consecrated one of his sons, probably the eldest, for that office, for want of one more fit; but meeting, at last, with a *Levite*, he engaged him to serve in that sta-

station, and consecrated him, in full belief that this action would be acceptable to *Jehovah*.

And, accordingly, we see *Jehovah* was propitious to this pious, though irregular design. The *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, consulted by the *Danites* about the success of their undertaking, returned a true answer; which so far raised the esteem of the *Danites* for those sacred symbols, that they robbed *Micah* of them, and set them up in their own country; where they continued in reputation till the Captivity.

Micah, complaining of the injury done him in taking from him the *Teraphim*, says they had taken away his *Elohim*, his God. It is difficult, if at all possible, to imagine that *Micah*, who set up those figures to do service to *Jehovah*, could have meant any more than that the *Teraphim* were the Symbol, or representation, of the *Elohim*, necessary to be used in the chief act of religious service; and, if that shall be the construction, the resemblance between *Teraphim* in private service, before the *Mosaic Law*, and *Cherubim* in the publick service, after it, is pretty observable.

It was, in all appearance, for the same reason, and to the same end, that *Gideon*, a servant of the true God, who had seen the *Angel Jehovah*, to whom *Jehovah* had spoken, to whom and by whom *Jehovah* had wrought wonders, made an *Ephod* of the golden spoils of the *Midianites*, and set it up in *Ophrah*, his city; whither the *Israelites*, in process of time, ran a whoring after it, and where it became a snare to *Gideon*, and to his house.

That this *Ephod* had *Teraphim*, and all the proper appurtenances, as *Micah's* had, attending upon it, is not to be doubted; and it is remarkable, that *Gideon's* act is not censured for any inherent malignity in it, but only for the consequences of it; as the *Ephod* he set up, in process of time, debauched the people, and became a snare to him, and to his house.

These instances, pretty plainly, shew, that *Teraphim* were no more than a copy of the original *Cherubim*, applied to the same uses that the *Cherubim* were on the mercy-seat: and as all mankind agree, from many clear proofs,

proofs, that the *Teraphim* were images, or representations, of what the ancients took to be expressive of their Deity, it can hardly be questioned that the *Cherubim* were intended for the same purpose.

Supposing this to have been the case; as the very exhibition must have been intended to represent *Trinity* in the Deity, and the share each *Person* had in the salvation of man, it is impossible the *Jews* could have rejected the belief of the *Trinity*, and with it the *Messiah* upon his *advent*, so long as they retained the memory, and the understanding, of that *hieroglyphical* representation. But, as it was fixed in Providence that they should disbelieve the one, and reject the other, their wild *imagination*s, whilst the figures remained in the temple, led them to neglect all reflection upon them, and to run after false gods; and this necessary piece of knowledge, towards understanding the system of grace, dropt so totally out of their heads, or rather they had framed notions so contrary to it, that, upon their return from the captivity, the Ark and *Cherubim* had no room in their temple; though these were the very *kernel* of all their religious ceremonies, and though the knowledge of the figures of the *Cherubim* was preserved by *Ezekiel*, a Prophet allowed by themselves to be inspired, as the dimensions and fabrick of the *mercy-seat* was by *Moses*.

That the shutting up those figures in the *Sanctum sanctorum* might have contributed to the loss of the knowledge of their form, amongst the *Jews*, may be true; but then, if they had not been described by *Ezekiel*, that loss would have been total, and irreparable; and we, as well as they, should be deprived of the benefit of that representation, to evidence the original and permanent design of the merciful Deity: but as the loss of the ideas, which ought to have resulted from that representation, answered the end of God in the hardness of the *Jews*; so the preservation of those sacred figures, by *Ezekiel*, serves to convict the *Jews* of that hardness, to render them inexcusable for their infidelity, and, at the same time, to confirm and illustrate the faith of *Christians*.

The form and the meaning of the representation in the

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Cberubim, is not the only piece of useful knowledge the *Jews*, to whose custody the sacred oracles were committed, have lost as to themselves; though, in preserving the sacred books, they have providentially saved them for the benefit and instruction of those who were called, to be the people of God, in their stead.

It has been already observed, that there is a particular emphasis, which the *Jews* will not see, in the plural *Elohim*, used always in scripture to signify God; and it is uncontestable, that the word itself carries some idea in it descriptive of some character, some relation, the *Being* described bears to Man.

The word *Jehovah* the *Septuagint* translates Κυριος , and we, after it, *Lord*; because of the delicacy of the original interpreters, who might think it some sort of prophanation to translate that sacred word, and make it common in its known meaning. Neither *Jew* nor *Christian* doubts that *Jehovah* expresses the essence that necessarily exists; and every body knows that it does not mean what Κυριος properly signifies: the *Greek* word is a faithful and just translation of *Adoni*, which the superstitious *Jews* have placed in the room of *Jehovah*; it signifies *Dominus*, *Lord*, *Master*, but carries nothing in it of the idea of the *Original*.

The idea resulting from the word Κυριος , *Lord*, is relative, and bears a particular regard to *subjects*, *servants*, without which the idea of *Lord* cannot subsist; but the idea arising from the word *Jehovah* is absolute, bearing no relation to any thing but itself, and standing fixed, and determined by itself, subsisting though nothing besides did exist.

And, therefore, we can reasonably say, *my Lord*, *thy Lord*, *his Lord*, *our Lord*, *their Lord*, *the Lord of the land*, &c. and those expressions are often used in scripture; but we cannot say, *my Jehovah*, *thy Jehovah*, &c. and in fact there is no such expression in the whole sacred book: and, when we translate, *my Lord*, *thy Lord*, &c. the word translated is never *Jehovah*, but always *Adoni*, or some other word of the same signification.

As we discover the idea conveyed by *Jehovah* to be
absolute,

absolute, so we perceive the idea implied in *Elohim* to be relative, by the use of it: nothing is more common than *my, thy, our, their, his, Elohim*, which never is said of *Jehovah*; and, as the word has some signification of relation, the *Translators* ought to have expressed it by a word that bore some such sense.

But, as they have erred in rendering the absolute word *Jehovah* by the word *Lord*, which carries an idea significant of relation: so they have erred, on the other hand, by rendering the word *Elohim* Θεός, Θεοί, *God, Gods*; which, so far as we know by the derivation assigned for it, has nothing significant in it, at least carries no idea of relation to us, or to any other thing.

If the word Θεός, or the word *God*, have no significant meaning in themselves, and are made use of, as sounds, only to raise the idea of the eternal Being; then the applying that word by the relatives *my, thy, &c.* is improper; the eternal *Being*, absolutely considered, has no more relation to one, than to another: and, if the term Θεός had originally any signification of relation, by all we can discover from the *Greek* antiquities, it was lost long before the *Septuagint* translation; nor do we know what the precise meaning of the *Saxon* word *God* was, other than to denote the supreme beneficent Being.

The *Jews*, therefore, ought to have translated the word *Jehovah* by a word of the same signification; or at least to have rendered it *totidem literis*, if they could not find a word of the same import; and they ought not to have translated it by a word that has another and a different meaning: and they ought not to have translated *Elohim*, which most certainly had a signification of relation, by a word which had no signification at all of relation affixed to it; on the contrary, they ought to have kept up, in the translation, to the true meaning of the word; or to have retained the *Hebrew* term, *totidem literis*, in the translation, as they did in proper names; for then, though they must have left men in the dark, they would not have misled them, nor done the mischief they have done to their successors.

Without enquiring whether the loss, or the concealing

of the meaning of this word, proceeded from folly, or faultiness, or from a mixture of both, in the *Jews*, it is highly necessary to search, in order to the recovery of it; knowing the genius of the *Hebrew* language to be such, that significant words are framed from roots that yield some certain, fixed idea, and thereby convey a determined meaning.

In looking over the *radical* words of the *Hebrew* language, one finds the root *Elab* to mean an *Oath*, or *Adjuration*, the *Execration* made to affect the breaker of a *covenant*; and the genius of the language certainly admits the word *Elab* to be used, from that, to signify a person that hath taken upon him this oath, and *Elohim* to denote more persons become subject to it, or entering into *covenant*, or agreement, together.

That *Elohim* should be formed, from this root, to signify persons under the obligation or execration of an oath, may seem, at first sight, somewhat hard; but that notion will become more familiar, when one considers that *Jehovah*, throughout the sacred scriptures, is said on many occasions, in confirmation of any promise, or *covenant*, relating to a future event, to swear, to swear by himself, so swear as *Jehovah* liveth, in order to create absolute certainty, and reliance on the performance.

Why *Jehovah* is thus represented as taking an oath, and what the nature and manner of that oath may be, merits a distinct consideration; but since, in fact, he represents himself to us in that light, as binding his promises by oath, we may easily conceive why he may chuse to be called, and considered, as the God bound by oath, the Being solemnly engaged under an immutable obligation, by those who are to believe in, and rely on his promises.

Though we have no footstep, so far as I know, left of this signification, in the terms which the *Greeks*, or *Romans*, or other later heathens, made use of to signify the Deity; yet the *Greeks* had their *Jupiter* *Opus*, and the *Romans* their *Jupiter Fœderator*; and nothing was more common, amongst those heathens, than the notion that the supreme God could bind himself by oath; nay they

they describe, with fictitious circumstances, the particular *oath* that was immutable. Here, again, is an instance of a very extraordinary notion, very far from being deducible from *the light of nature*, pick'd up, and maintained universally, amongst the most ancient nations we know ; which tallies wonderfully with what the sacred *book*, of which they knew nothing, exhibites ; and must, therefore, have flowed from the same original.

If we admit that *Elohim* carries the notion of *Federatives*, *Beings* or *Persons* in *Alliance*, bound by *oath* to make their engagement effectual, then we evidently see why they may, are, and ought to be, called *my*, *our*, *their*, &c. *Elohim* ; why *Jehovah* describes himself by the title of the *Elohim* of *Abraham*, of *Isaac*, of *Jacob*, of *Israel* ; why they call upon him as their *Elohim* ; why, in their praises, they ascribe to their *Elohim* power, goodness, faithfulness, beyond the *Elohim* of other nations ; and why the leading encouragement to the *Israelites*, to do well, is, that *Jehovah* is, or will be, *their Elohim*, and they are, or shall be, to him a *peculiar people* ; as, on the other hand, if they broke their *covenant*, the *Elah*, the *oath* or *execration* would reach them.

And, surely, if *Jehovah* was pleased to make, or to represent himself as making a *covenant* for the benefit of mankind, or of any particular people, by which he was unalterably bound to redeem and preserve them, on their performing certain conditions, the most kind, and, at the same time, the most useful appellation he could chuse to be addressed to by, is that of *Elohim*, in the notion of *Federator* ; because it could not be pronounced, with attention, without raising the most thankful sentiments of the mercy and goodness of God, joined to the strongest confidence in his favour ; and, at the same time, warning the party of the danger of transgressing, by non-compliance with the conditions to which he, on his part, was bound.

If *Elohim* was a term peculiar to *Jehovah*, as God of *Israel*, with whom he plainly appears to have been in *covenant*, the reason of that appellation would be pretty obvious ; but so it happens, that he is called *the Elohim* of *the whole Earth* ; and, in the description of the Creation,

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the works performed by the *Eternal* are said to be done by the *Elohim*, and all the ancient nations admitted the term *Elohim* as descriptive of their God. So that it will be a strong objection against this sense of the word *Elohim*, if no reasonable account can be given of an earlier covenant than that with *Abraham*, and if that covenant did not extend to all mankind.

Whoever believes that there are *three persons* in the Deity, whereof *one* became bound to join himself to humanity, and perform compleat righteousness, and give compleat satisfaction for the sins of mankind; *one* became bound to assist man, thus redeemed, to do his duty, and to reform his heart; and *one* became bound to accept of this satisfaction, and, upon receiving it, to admit man to fellowship and favour; will not scruple to allow, that, before even the creation, a covenant, or agreement was made to this purpose between the sacred *three*, in the event of man's falling: and he will be the less scrupulous to admit this, when he considers several texts that suppose it, particularly the 110th *Psalms*, v. 4. which says, *Jehovah hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek.*

But, whatever may be thought of this; as none, who considers and believes the scriptures, can doubt that this covenant was made known to the first man, on the fall; if that term *Elohim* was consecrated for his information and comfort, it would pass current amongst all mankind, his descendents; and that would sufficiently authorise *Moses*, in describing the creation, to make use of the term *Elohim*, ascribing to *Jehovah*, the *Elohim* upon whose fidelity all mankind were to depend for salvation, the creation of this system, and of man.

And though *Moses* does not, formally, relate that *Jehovah* acquainted man, immediately upon the fall, of a covenant made for his salvation; yet several passages, as recorded by him, shew that mankind had early knowledge of this covenant. For, in speaking to *Noah*, both before and after the flood, *Jehovah* says he will establish his covenant with *Noah*, and with his seed; not using the word that is, commonly, translated to *make a covenant*, which

which would have been done if no *covenant* had been made before; but making choice of an expression that presupposed a *covenant*, formerly made, and known to be made to *Noah*, who was made sure he was to reap, after that declaration, the benefit of it.

And if one enters into the belief that this *covenant* (which gave birth to the appellation *Elohim*) was made by the *Elohim*, from the beginning, and was intimated to mankind, upon the *fall*, when the purpose of mercy was first revealed; and when, for explaining and recording that purpose of grace, the whole *emblematical institution* was appointed, and the *Cherubim* were exhibited; he will readily admit, that the position of the two *Cherubs*, with their faces looking towards each other, and at the *mercy-seat*, where the blood for atonement was to be sprinkled, might represent the *Elohim*, as parties in the act for making a *covenant*, looking and relying on each other for the performance, and regarding the blood, which was the *emblem* of the consideration for which man was to be redeemed: and this opinion he will the more readily give into, when he recollects that the ark, which supported the *Mersey-Seat* and the *Cherubim*, the principal emblems of the *Jewish* religion, is most commonly called *the Ark of the Covenant*.

As the *Jews* cannot be pardoned the losing the sense of the word *Elohim*, they can hardly be forgiven their plain endeavour to hide the original meaning of the word, translated, *covenant*.

That *Berith*, the word so translated, does not, in its original sense, signify *covenant*, is evident from this; that the formal phrase made use of to signify *the making a covenant* is, precisely, *to cut off*, or *slay*, *Berith*; much in the same way as *icere*, *percitere*, *ferire*, *facere*, is, amongst the *Romans*, to signify *the making a covenant*.

Berith, therefore, in its original signification, denotes something that was to be cut off, to be slain; and *Moses*, *Exod. xxiv. 8.* after having, as the symbol of the *covenant* concluded between *Jehovah* and the People, divided the blood of the sacrifice into two equal parts, and after having sprinkled the one half on the altar, sprinkled the other half

half on the people, saying, *Behold the blood of Berith, which Jehovah hath cut off with you, concerning all these words.* And, *Zech. ix. 11.* prisoners are set free by the *blood of the covenant, Berith.*

The Latin *Literati* very truly assign the rise of the phrase *ferire fœdus*, when they say, that in all leagues, covenants, and agreements, it was the ancient and original custom to slay some victim, to sacrifice; whence, mentioning the solemn act, the slaying the victim, in common usage, came to signify the whole act of making a league, to which it was applied: but they fail in assigning an adequate reason for the ceremony of slaying any animal, at treaties; which again must have given rise to the form of speech in question.

It has been already observed, that the blood of the Redeemer, who, in due time, *was to be cut off*, was the consideration of the original covenant between the *Elohim*, and between them and man; and the cutting off, and sprinkling the blood of a *type*, a creature substituted in the room of the Redeemer, till his real advent, was the *Symbol* of that *Covenant*, used, even by *Jehovah*, in making *Covenants* with men, as in the instance at *Sinai*; and, therefore, used by all men when they entered into solemn agreements with each other. *Cutting off a creature*, then, in a particular manner, or under a particular character, being the *symbol* of that important *covenant*, it is no great wonder that men, in their solemn engagements with each other, should make use of that sacred act; and that saying, shortly, that such *creature*, by such name or character, *was cut off*, should, in common usage, signify that a *covenant was made*.

Though these reflections may give some reasonable satisfaction why *cutting off*, or *slaying*, a *victim* was used in making *covenants*; yet it is still necessary to enquire what particular character the thing, called *Berith*, bore to distinguish it from common victims in ordinary sacrifices, and to appropriate it to the use of *binding covenants*; since there is no appearance, after the most accurate search, that *Berith* was the name of any sort of animal used in sacrifice.

In

In examining carefully the *Old Testament*, two passages, and no more, are to be met with where the *Jews* have not ventured to translate the word *Berith*, *covenant*, but have been necessarily obliged by the context to give it its true, original signification; though, to divert the reader's attention, and to prevent his making any inferences from the sense of the word, in these texts, they have, in an arbitrary manner, pointed the letters so as to make the same letters, which in every other passage, sound *Berith*, to be in these texts pronounced *Borith*.

Mal. iii. 2. The Angel of the covenant, of *Berith*, is said to be like the refiner's fire, and like fuller's *Berith*, sope, and comes to purge and to purify. And,

Jer. ii. 22. Reproaching *Israel* for their wickedness and uncleanness, *Jehovah* saith, *For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take the much Berith, sope; yet thine iniquity is marked before me.*

These passages, evidently, shew, that the word *Berith* has in it the notion of cleansing, purifying; and the root from which, in that sense, it must rise, is *Bar*, *Baran*, which signifies *pure*, *to purify*; and the word *Berith*, formed from that root, may signify properly *purification*, a *purifier*, a person or thing fit to *purify*.

Keeping in view this notion of the word, and recollecting that every thing was, under the *Law*, even the most holy things, to be cleansed, to be expiated, to be sanctified, by blood; that the pollutions of mankind were to be washed away by it; and that the blood, which thus cleansed, was but *typical* only of the blood of the real *purifier*, who, in the *New Testament* language, is *to wash us in his blood from all our iniquities*: who can help concluding, that the great sacrifice to be *cut off*, in due time, was called *Berith*, *the purifier*, to signify the end of shedding his blood; that the representative beasts, *the types*, were called by the same name; that to *slay*, or *cut off*, *Berith*, or the beast representing *Berith*, *the purifier*, being the very sign, or *symbol*, of the great, the original *covenant* for the salvation of mankind, which was to be repeated for confirmation of solemn *covenants* amongst men, the term or expression of *cutting off Berith*, or the *purifier*, came

came in process of time to signify the act to which, amongst men, it was applied, the *making a covenant*; the word *Berith* retaining, nevertheless, its original signification, and being to be taken in that sense, when the scope of the text requires it should?

Understanding the matter thus, many passages, that otherwise are extremely obscure, if at all sense, become clear and significant. *Isa. xlii. 6. I Jehovah will give thee for a Berith, covenant, of the people, and for a light of the Gentiles. xlix. 8. I Jehovah will give thee for a Berith, covenant, of the people, to establish the earth.* If what is translated *covenant*, were rendered, as it ought to be, *purifier*, nothing could be more clear and comfortable than those texts.

Upon the same principle the blood of *Berith*, the *covenant*, will signify the blood of the *purifier*, without excluding the notion of that blood being the *seal*, and *symbol*, of the *covenant*.

And, in like manner, in many passages where *Jehovah*, instead of using the word, translated *to make a covenant*, uses other words, which signify, *establishing, giving, placing, his Berith, covenant*, to, or with, any one, the word *Berith* may more properly mean *the purifier*, than the *covenant*.

Gen. vi. 18. When *Jehovah* acquaints *Noah* that he is to destroy the earth, with all its inhabitants, he assures him, at the same time, that he is *to establish his Berith* with him, and his family. Now, if *Berith* be taken, in that place, for the *purifier*, the promise amounts to this, that *the great purifier* was to come of his *Line*; which happened accordingly.

In the same way, *Gen. xvii. 2. Jehovah* says to *Abraham*, *I will give my Berith between thee and me. And v. 4. As for me, behold my Berith, covenant, is with thee.* And, if by *Berith*, in those expressions, is meant the *purifier*, then these are formal declarations that the *Messiah* was to come of *Abraham*; which explains the other declarations, *that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed.*

And that declaration in which *David* so much exults,
in

in what is called *his last words*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. yet he hath placed with me an, or the, everlasting Berith, will signify that *Jehovah* had decreed the purifier, the Messiah, should spring out of his house, though his house was not so right with God as he could have wished it.

Many more passages will appear in a very different light, from what they did formerly, upon taking the word in this sense; which may be the reason why the *Jews*, who mistook the true *Berith*, when he came in accomplishment of the *Law*, and the *Prophets*, have used much skill to hide the true meaning; which most undoubtedly was understood by their forefathers, after the death of *Gideon*, when *Judg.* viii. 33. they went a whoring after *Baalim*, and made *Baal Berith* their God, to whom there was a house, or temple, at *Shechem*, chap. 9. under the title of *El Berith*, or the God *Berith*.

Whether the *Israelites* or the *Canaanites* built this temple, is not material; the God was, surely, of the manufacture of *Canaan*, who spoke the same language with the *Jews*, and expected purification as well as they, though perhaps after a strange manner. *Baal*, or *El Berith*, translated the Lord, or God, the covenant, will hardly make sense; but the Lord, or God, the purifier, might be a proper object of worship, for those who were so fond of purification, as to cause their children to pass through the fire to purify them, and even to sacrifice their children, by fire, to atone for crimes, and avert wrath.

Having said so much for explaining the *Hebrew* phrase for making a covenant, it may not be improper to enquire a little into the origin of the *Latin* phrase *ferire*, *icere*, *percutere*, *fœdus*, which evidently is of the same kindred.

Waving the conjecture of the *Grammarians*, that *fœdus* might, in the old *Tuscan* language, have been used for *hœdus*, a kid, which again might be the animal accustomed to be slain, or cut off at concluding treaties; because it neither appears that *hœdus* was anciently written *fœdus*, nor that a kid was the regular sacrifice: I think it most probable that *fœdus*, in the phrase in question,

tion, meant originally what the adjective *ſædus*, -a, -um, means, at this day, *vile, abominable, polluted*.

Now, it is certain that in the *Hebrew* language the sacrifice gained its name, from the end for which it was offered; a *ſin-offering* is called, briefly, *Sin*; a *treſpaſs-offering*, a *Treſpaſs*; wherefore the *viſtim*, brought for a *ſin-offering*, is called, without any addition, a *Sin*. Hence a man is directed to bring *his ſin*, if a creature, the type of that *Perſon* who was to ſtand in the place of the ſinner, to the door of the tabernacle, to lay his hand upon the head of his *ſin*; the *Priſt* is to kill the *Sin*, to pour out the *blood of the Sin*, &c. without adding at all the word *offering*, to explain the meaning.

As, then, all religious rites flowed from the ſame ſource, and were inſtituted in the ſame language, it is very natural to conclude, that, upon the formation of a new language, the expreſſions concerning thoſe ſacred rites would be framed in ſome conformity to the original language. Now, if, in the firſt language, that which was offered for *ſin*, which was to atone for it, and to purge it away, was, by thoſe who expected that effect from it, called *ſin*; why may not we believe, that what was offered to purge what was termed *ſedity, pollution, abomination*, might be called *ſædus*, if *ſædus* in the language of the country, ſignified *ſedity, pollution, uncleanness*.

And, if it is allowed that *ſædus* might ſignify the creature offered to atone for ſin, or uncleanness, then *ſerire, percutere, ſædus*, would be the very act of offering for *ſin*, and muſt come to ſignify *making a covenant*, in the very ſame way that *cutting off, or ſlaying, Berith* does.

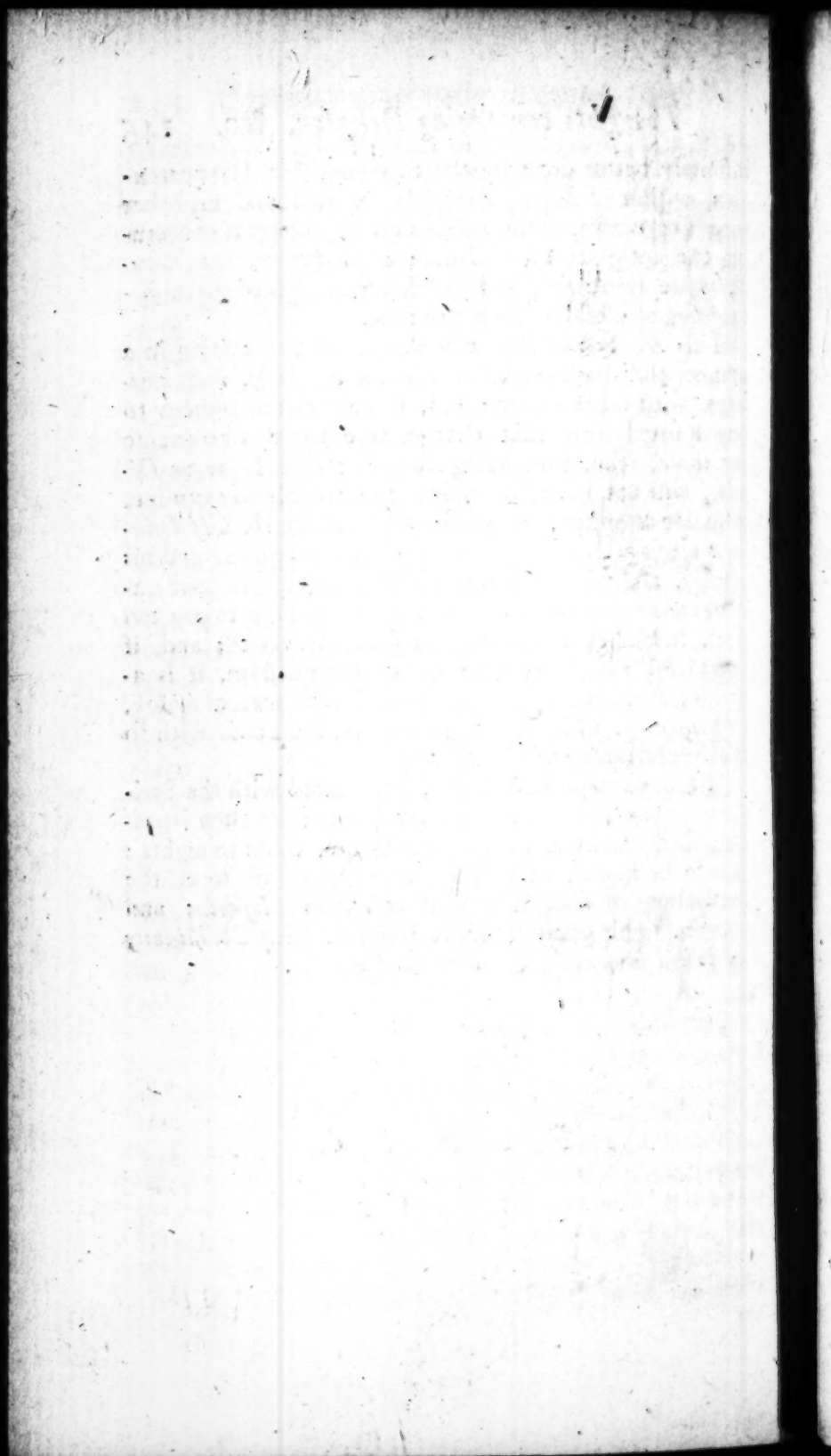
To theſe obſervations, which tend to ſhew the antiquity, and authority, of *Revelation*, and the true end and meaning of the *emblematical, and predictive inſtitutions*, as well as of the terms in which the *written will of God* is conveyed, many more might be added; and thoſe already offered, might be ſupported by producing paſſages from Authors ſacred, and prophane, by which they are to be vouched: But as, on the one hand, to do ſo would exceed the deſign of theſe ſheets; ſo, on the other, it would be but doing, over again, what is already

infinitely better done by the ingenious Mr. HUTCHINSON, author of *Moses's Principia*, in that and his other surprising works, from whence all the thoughts concerning the antiquity of, and manner of interpreting *Revelation* are borrowed, and which are fraughted with *discoveries*, as useful as they are new.

This *Author* has been complained of for writing in a manner that has been called abstruse and dark, and, perhaps, with some reason; but, if he is not altogether to be acquitted from that charge, sure there is no excuse for those, who, pretending to admit *Revelation* as *Divine*, will not give themselves the trouble to examine, with due attention, his *Works*, which make *the Old Testament* speak a language understood by our *Saviour* and his *Apostles*, and which hardly any body appears to have understood since their days. It is scarce possible to pay too dear, in labour, and study, for such discoveries; and, if regard for *Revelation* were out of the question, it is amazing that curiosity does not prevail with men of *leisure*, and *learning*, to look into books that are stored with so much entertainment in *that* way.

If any unprejudiced person, acquainted with the *Scriptures*, who has looked into the ancient heathen learning, shall examine, with tolerable care, those thoughts; it is to be hoped, he will find a ready answer to all the productions of *modern*, as well as *ancient*, *Infidels*; and remain, to his great comfort, satisfied, *That Christianity* is, indeed very near, as old as the *Creation*.

F I N I S.



A
L E T T E R
T O A
B I S H O P,
C O N C E R N I N G
Some Important Discoveries
I N
Philosophy and Theology.

First printed in the Year 1732.



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MY LORD,

ATHEISM, Deism, and the whole train of opinions that attend what is commonly called *Freethinking*, flow from a settled disbelief and contempt of Revelation.

This disbelief is in a great measure owing to the want of a fair and unprejudiced examination of the numerous and various proofs and evidences that support the truth and authority of the Scriptures.

But it is chiefly grounded on a firm persuasion, That human understanding is a sufficient guide to man, and the test and measure of all matters of belief; so that we are at liberty, nay indeed bound, to reject whatever does not answer those notions, which, by what we call Reasoning, we have fixed:

That modern discoveries, the fruit of genius and application only, have fixed and determined to a certainty the laws and causes of the principal operations and phenomena of Nature, which were wholly unknown to the ancients, and mistaken by the authors of the books which are received as Revelation :

That therefore these books, so far as they give accounts of Nature, contrary to experience, and demonstration resulting from it, are false ; and consequently can, in no other point, pass for infallible :

That the Scriptures relate a great many marvellous, improbable, nay incredible transactions, which do not seem to be directed to any purpose, suited to sovereign wisdom and goodness ; and to contain a world of institutions, laws, observances and ceremonies, which to Freethinkers appear absurd, frivolous, and ridiculous ; unworthy the supposed author, and improper to attain the proposed end.

When any apparent mistake in Natural Philosophy is objected to the Scriptures, the answer commonly given is, in my opinion, stronger than the objection, according to the views of the disputants on either side, That these things, being incidental only, are spoken *ad captum humanum*, and accommodated to the understandings of those to whom they were delivered ; though, I confess, it would be a much more comfortable answer, if it could be said, and proved, that the things objected to are true.

When Freethinkers ground themselves upon any improbable, or, as they will call it, incredible or absurd relation, there is no answering them without bringing together, and laying before them, the whole evidence that serves for supporting Revelation ; which, when poised in the scale against all objections of this kind that ever have been made, in my opinion, may certainly outweigh them : but, the misfortune is, the objection glares, can be taken in by a very moderate capacity, and requires no learning, and but little attention, to comprehend it ; whereas, without long study, great learning, close attention, and a dispassionate and unprejudiced examination, the evidence for Revelation cannot be collected

ed and weighed. Whoever therefore lets in the strength of the objection, and, for want of learning or attention, (not to speak of natural prejudices), either cannot, or will not give himself the trouble to collect and weigh the proofs on the other side, must necessarily give it against Revelation, and fortify himself in his incredulity.

And to this it is owing that all those, who, in this indolent and luxurious age, pretend to politeness, and aim at knowledge, and the reputation of understanding and science, without any expence of learning or labour, and without any interruption to their pleasures or pursuits, take up with objections against Revelation, without the painful examination of the evidence that supports it; look down with contempt on Believers, as a parcel of prejudiced Enthusiasts; and inlist themselves with Free-thinkers, as the honestest, wisest set of men living.

And when men, carried by pleasures, or sunk in indolence, settle once upon these notions, every institution, ordinance or ceremony appointed in Scripture, for which Christians cannot, or do not assign an adequate use or end, becomes fresh matter of objection, and tends to rivet and confirm infidelity.

This facility of receiving and taking up with objections, and the criminal indolence and neglect of those who do not give themselves the trouble to examine, with due care, the merits of the answer, has been long complained of, and lamented, by all who wish well to mankind; but hitherto in vain: something more than argument must intervene, to cool them in the pursuit of pleasures, to rouse their attention to their real interest, and to determine them to search with care and industry, before they will let in so much as a suspicion that their objections are ill founded; or those objections must be overthrown by some other and shorter mean than the complicated evidence for the authority of Revelation, else the objectors will never give themselves the trouble to discover their mistakes.

Some time ago, as my thoughts were employed in these disagreeable reflections, a set of books were sent me by my bookseller to look over. The titles were odd,

and provoked my curiosity: *Moses's Principia*, *part 1. and 2.*; *An essay toward a Natural History of the Bible*; *Moses's—fine principio*; *A new account of the Confusion of Tongues, and the Names and Attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles*, were inscribed at the head of these several tracts, all published successively in different years, from the year 1724: and these are followed by another work, that was published very lately, intitled, *A treatise of Power, essential and mechanical*.

Running over these books cursorily, I readily perceived, the Author proposed to prove, That the *Hebrew* Scriptures had never been, and are not now, truly translated, or perfectly understood by those who pretend to be learned: That, rightly translated and understood, they comprise a perfect system of Natural Philosophy, as well as a compleat body of Theology and Religion: That they no where assert any of those heterodoxies in Philosophy, which modern observations shew to be such; but, on the contrary, teach and aver every thing that has been truly gathered from observations or experiments, recent or ancient; and propose and explain mechanical principles different from, nay in many things diametrically opposite to those now received; by which all the various operations in Nature are performed, and which tally with, and can be supported by every observation and experiment that hath been truly taken or made: That the seeming absurdities, with which the Scriptures are charged, either are not in the original, and are therefore owing to the ignorance or perverse design of the translators; or are, when rightly understood, no blemishes, but beauties, in the Revelation: and, That the many institutions, declarations and observances, which appear frivolous to those who do not understand them, are the product of perfect wisdom and contrivance, necessary to explain and preserve the Religion inculcated in the *Old Testament*, and fit to prepare for that which afterwards was delivered in the *New*.

But though I easily gathered this to be the Author's proposal and intention; yet, upon looking into particulars, I found the proofs depended so much on the true
 con-

construction of the *Hebrew* language, to which I was very much a stranger; and on an exact knowledge of the experiments and observations that have been made on the works of Nature, with which I am but very little acquainted; that his reasoning, almost every where, appeared to me intricate and arbitrary: and I was not without some doubts, that the obscurity I complained of, proceeded partly from design, for reasons that I could not penetrate.

Finding, from my own want of knowledge, such difficulty in examining the proofs offered to support propositions of such universal import to mankind, and which I wished so earnestly to discover to be conclusive and true; I resorted to several learned men of my acquaintance, skilled in the ancient language, on which the Author grounds himself, and conversant in the observations and experiments on which the modern Philosophy of Nature is built; not doubting but they had considered, and framed a certain judgment of his works. But, to my great surprise, though all of them had heard of, and seen some part of those tracts, yet not one of them had given himself the trouble to examine them. They complained of the intricacy and abstruseness of the Author's way of writing, and concluded him so certainly to be half-learn'd, visionary, and in the wrong, because his notions were contradictory to what they by long study had adopted and made their own, that they laid aside his books without any farther enquiry, as what did not deserve, or would not answer the trouble of an examination.

Though I could have relied on these Gentlemen's judgment, if they had considered the Author's opinions and arguments with any care; yet, finding that they had censured without examination, and not being able to meet with any person whatever, who had given himself the trouble of canvassing with due attention his arguments, on a matter of so general concern; I rubbed up the little *Hebrew* I had, and addressed myself to a more careful perusal of the books; not with any hopes of being able finally to judge of the certainty of his supposed discoveries, but with a design to collect the general drift and ten-

tendency of his reasoning ; to the end I might lay it before those who are infinitely better able to judge than myself ; and who, from seeing scattered hints brought together, might be invited to consider the matter more seriously ; to condemn and refute any thing that is false, and to approve, support and propagate every thing that is true. For I cannot help thinking it some reproach to the curiosity, as well as religious zeal of the Clergy of this nation, that sentiments so new and surprising, in matters of Religion, should have been stalking about for so many years, without meeting with any examination, approbation, or confutation.

To give your Lordship, then, (from whose great proficiency in the Eastern learning, the only foundation of Scripture-knowledge ; and your thorough knowledge of Natural things, from whence all ideas of beings and things invisible are conveyed ; your known readiness to forward any work in favour of Religion, especially a work of this kind, to establish the true meaning of the Scriptures, much wanted, I expect a solution of my doubts), an account of these things that have made the greatest impression on me, in the order in which I have been able to comprehend them :

The Author affirms, (what I think most of the learned world, at present, agree in), That pointing in the *Hebrew* writings is a modern invention, some centuries later than the days of our Saviour, contrived after the language ceased to be commonly spoken by the *Jews*, to favour their own constructions ; and therefore of no authority to determine the sense of any word, but for that reason to be avoided.

That as the understanding, so the proper and original sense of many of the *Hebrew* words used to express matters of importance in Philosophy and Theology, was, in some degree, altered or lost, when the children of *Israel* made defections from the true Religion, before the *Babylonish* captivity : so, in the dispersion that attended that captivity, the pure *Hebrew* was altogether beat out of common usage, and the knowledge of it remained only amongst the few that were learned, and attentive to the

the true Religion and Philosophy that was delivered by *Moses*, and the other inspired writers.

That the *Greek* translation, commonly called the *Septuagint*, being made long after the return from the *Babylonish* captivity, when the genuine sense of the *Hebrew* words was, in a great measure, lost, is extremely imperfect; partly as the *Greek* language is destitute of words to convey the full and proper meaning of the *Hebrew* expressions; partly as the translators might have been ignorant, and might have accommodated their interpretation to their own views, in Philosophy and Theology, which were corrupted; and partly as they durst not (had their understanding been better) translate, in some points, truly, for fear of provoking the *Egyptians*, in whose country they composed their translation; and whose gods, had they given a faithful translation, they must to the last degree vilify and affront.

That, nevertheless, this and other translations so fully discover the genius of the *Hebrew* language, and so certainly translate words, when employed about matters that the interpreters were under no bias to render falsely, that a key from thence may be made for construing, with certainty, the whole *Hebrew* Scriptures.

The Author avers, that the *Hebrew* language (from which, it seems pretty certain, the *Phœnician*, the *Chaldeæ*, the *Syriack*, the *Arabick*, the *Greek*, the *Latin*, and divers other branches were derived) was the original one; framed in paradise, and with this particularity, that each root is taken from some particular beast, bird, plant, flower, or some other sensible object, and employed to represent some very obvious idea of action or condition raised by such sensible object; from whence it is further carried to signify spiritual or mental things, of which we can frame ideas only by the help of material or bodily things.

He denies that any one root in the whole language conveys ideas of a different meaning; and affirms that one, and but one, leading sense runs through all the formation of the same root; contrary to the established doctrine of the *Jews*, who, by variety of arbitrary pointings,

ings, ascribe different, and contradictory senses very often to a word composed of the very same letters ; with design, as our Author suggests, to darken the sense of the Scriptures, chiefly, if not altogether, in those points which contain the knowledge of the Christian system, and the Religion of the Heathens.

After observing that there is not one line of authentic *Hebrew* left in the whole world, but what is comprised in the books of the *Old Testament*, our Author insists that there is one, and but one, certain way of decyphering it ; that is, by comparing every word in all the various combinations and sentences in which it appears, and gathering from thence the leading or original idea it was intended to raise ; which is ever, from such comparison, with certainty to be collected.

He says, that though all the modern *Hebraicians* had the use of very accurate concordances, that might have helped them forward in this investigation, yet their progress was marred by the blind respect they paid to the false or fraudulent pointings of their adversaries the *Jews*; and that he, shaking himself loose from those fetters, has been able to settle the genuine meaning of every important word in the whole *Old Testament*.

And, from the fixed and perpetual meaning of the words so explained, he says he is able to shew, that the Scriptures, however disguised and disfigured by the translation, are written with the utmost accuracy, propriety, and truth ; that they contain a perfect system of Natural Philosophy, and, upon that grafted, a compleat system of Theology, so far as mankind is capable of receiving that sublime knowledge ; and unerring rules for all Religious service and belief.

Through the whole of his works he attempts to define and determine the true sense of a great many words used by *Moses* and the Prophets, in the description of the formation of the world, and the preservation and support of all the operations that are carried on in it ; he avers that the descriptions, by them given in these words, contain a mechanical account of all the powers, and of the operations carried on in, and by this material system :
and

and he insists that all the phænomena in Nature can be accounted for by the principles laid down by them.

But to give you as clear a view, as I am able, of the further design of our Author: He supposes it will not be denied to him, that man, a compound of soul and body, cannot frame to himself, or compare ideas, but such as are taken from sensible objects: What powers or faculties the soul might have, if detached from the body, we cannot know; but, as we are now made, we upon moderate reflection discover, that the soul of man, in this state, has not power to frame to itself, or to receive any idea that does not come from the senses, at least from some feeling or sensation communicated to it by, or through the body.

The sun, the light, the air, the earth, the body of man we can frame ideas of, as we can of the manner of their acting, and being acted upon; but the soul, which perceives and compares those ideas, we can frame no manner of idea of, nor of its manner of acting, or being acted upon.

And we, who know that we have no capacity to conceive any idea of any thing that does not affect our senses, must conclude, that our not perceiving is no proof that there may not be millions of different beings and substances round us, besides those that affect our senses, of which, and of their powers or actions, we can know nothing.

As man has not the least idea of the matter or substance of his own soul, or of its manner of acting, or being acted upon; so he has no capacity of reasoning about it, by comparing it with things perceived: He cannot, for example, compare it with space, or figure; he cannot say it is, or is not comprehended within limits of any kind; he cannot say it moves, or does not move, or at all imagine how it is supported, or acts.

We perceive how a solid body is moved by the impulse of another solid body, or of a fluid, and is continued in motion so long as the impulse lasts; and we can conceive how a plant or animal may be supported, may grow, or decay, mechanically, by the operation of
disse-

different material agents: but we can have no conception how the soul acts on itself, or on matter; how it is acted upon, or how it is supported.

And being so much in the dark concerning the principal part of ourselves, the only knowing thing in us, it is no wonder we should be incapable of framing any just idea of that invisible spiritual Being by which we, and every other created thing, were made.

Our Author thinks, that, by the light of Nature only, men could not possibly have discovered whether this material system, which, he says, is so framed as to be a self-moving machine, existed from eternity, and was the cause and support of itself, and of every thing in it; or whether it was contrived, and the parts of it put together, by an higher hand. But, be that as it will, and were it even to be supposed that man, by thorough observation, and by a just induction, could discover *à posteriori* the existence of some eternal self-existent cause, whose work this creation is; our Author seems to be well warranted, when he affirms, that it is presumptuous in man, because it is impossible, to frame such an idea of this invisible Agent, from his own scanty notions and apprehensions, as shall be the standard and test, by which to try every thing that is, or may be, in question concerning the first cause.

Man may, for example, be in the right to attribute all possible perfections to this Being; but, till he can determine what is absolute perfection, (taking in the circle of all possible beings, their actions and attributes), it is impossible for him with justice to conclude, that because this or that seems to him to be perfection, it therefore, according to the measure which he conceives of it, belongs to the Author of Nature.

And though it should be admitted that man, by the light of Nature, could discover the dependence of this created system on a self-existent Creator; yet it is certain he cannot frame to himself any idea of that Being, his nature, substance, powers, or manner of existing or acting; and that if there is any knowledge of such things
amongst

amongst men, it must come from some other source than that of Nature and observation.

From this state of man's nature the Author infers an indispensable necessity for Revelation ; if God intended that man should know him, his goodness, power, wisdom, and mercy ; should make returns of gratitude, love, adoration, and obedience ; and should conform himself to that order, which by the divine will was established : And that the knowledge of every thing that was to be known, and believed, was revealed, our Author insists will demonstrably be proved, when what is revealed, is understood and considered.

A Revelation therefore, our Author insists, was made by God to man, at two different periods ; the first, just after the creation, and upon the fall : the second, in the wilderness to the *Israelites*, and on various occasions afterwards, by different methods of communication, not to mention the appearances to the Patriarchs ; to restore the knowledge of the first Revelation, which had been pretty much lost, or misunderstood, and to fix and ascertain it by writing, (a method, as the Author will have it, then first revealed), so as it should never after be obliterated or left dubious.

To begin with the last : The first thing that is met with in the books of *Moses*, is an assertion that God created the heavens and the earth, which is followed by a particular account of the order and manner of the formation of all that was created, till the work was perfected. After which, God is said to have rested ; and our Author asserts, that it is also said, the perfect machine, then left to itself, carried on all the operations in this system, by certain known laws of mechanism, explained by *Moses*, and throughout the Scriptures by the other inspired penmen.

The sum of what our Author avers to be the doctrine of the Scriptures, on this head, is, That, besides the differently formed particles of which this earth, and the several metals, minerals, and other solid substances in it, and in the other solid orbs, are composed, God at first created all that subtile fluid which now is, and from the

creation has been, in the condition of fire, light, or air, and goes under the name of *the heavens*.

The particles of this fluid, (which our Author calls *atoms*), when they are single and uncompounded, are inconceivably minute, and so subtile as to pervade the pores of all substances whatever, whether solid, or fluid, without any great difficulty or resistance. When they are pushed forward in straight lines by the action of fire, or are reflected or refracted in straight lines, they produce light, and are so called; but when the interposition of any opaque body hinders their progress in straight lines, they pass, but cease to produce light.

These particles or atoms, which, when moving in straight lines, produce light; and, if collected, and put into another sort of motion, would produce heat and fire, are, as our Author insists, when the force impelling them ceases to act with vigour, and when their motion is retarded, so made, that they are apt to adhere in small masses or grains, which the Author calls *spirit*, or *air*; and is of the same kind and texture with that air which we daily breathe, and which we feel in wind when it blows.

The sun, which our Author places at the centre of this system, is an orb included in a vast collection of this subtile matter in the action of fire, which continually melts down all the air that is brought into it by the powerful action of the firmament or expansion, hereafter to be explained, into the subtile matter just mentioned; and with an immense force sends forth, in perpetual streams of light, this same subtile matter so melted down, to the circumference of this system; which the Author says is bounded, as he avers the space comprehended within it is absolutely full.

The matter thus melted down at the orb of the sun into light, must, as every thing is full, either stand still, or make its way outwards to the circumference, being forced by the particles, which are concentered into air at the utmost extremities; and return towards the sun, where the fluid being most subtile gives least resistance, and takes up the place that the light left.

And

And therefore this endless uninterrupted flux of matter from the sun in light, in place of being an expence that should destroy that orb, (which our Author takes to be an insupportable objection to Sir *Isaac Newton's* scheme), is the very means of preserving it, and every thing else in this system, in its action and vigour, by pressing back perpetual supplies of air to be melted down into light, and thereby produces a continual circulation. These perpetual fluxes or tides of matter outwards and inwards, in every point, from the centre to the circumference, mechanically, and necessarily, as our Author insists, produce that constant gyration in the earth and the planets round their own centres, and round the sun; and he avers, though he has not yet thought fit to explain it, that the same principle, with some circumstances, arising from the situation and fluxes of light coming from the other orbs, will account also for the motions of the moon.

Besides the rotation of the orbs, the Author affirms, that the adverse motions of the light pushing towards the circumference, and the air pushing towards the centre with immense force, forms a general expansion, (as he translates the word rendered *firmament*), which brings that stress or compressure on all bodies it meets with, that binds together solids, keeps fluids as they were, causes the variation of times and seasons, the raising of water, the production of vegetables and animals, and, in short, produces all the effects falsely ascribed to gravity or attraction; continues motion without the assistance of the unmechanical principle of projection; produces, supplies, and supports vegetables, fruits and animals; in short, produces almost all the effects and phænomena in Nature.

These are some of the outlines of our Author's Philosophy; very repugnant, indeed, to the notions commonly received; but the authorities, by which he avers he can support them, are two, and they are pretty considerable.

First, He says that *Moses* and the Prophets, who, by divine authority, were to reveal and explain to mankind how the operations in this system were carried on, have in plain terms said so. And,

Secondly, He affirms that he can, by comparing every true

true observation and experiment that have at any time been made by the Royal Society, or its members, or by any foreign societies of learned men; and by a great many observations and experiments made by himself, to which the curious have hitherto very little attended, with the system of Philosophy revealed in the Scriptures; shew, that all the various phenomena of Nature are to be accounted for mechanically thereby; and that the modern systems, as well as all others not taken from the Scriptures, are false, absurd, and unmechanical.

It is because this looks highly improbable, if not impossible to most men, that an examination of our Author's notions are neglected: but as, in proportion as it is improbable, it would confirm the Scriptures, should it be found true; I confess my desire is the greater, that the men, qualified to judge, would examine it.

As it is extremely new, so, at first sight, it seems odd, that our Author should suppose it necessary for the Creator to give to mankind a course of Philosophy, so to speak; but, to remove this difficulty, he reasons to this effect.

The end to which a rational discerning soul was given to man, was, that by the organs of the body he might perceive the beauty, the order, the harmony of Nature; and thence receive ideas of the infinite wisdom, power, and goodness of its Author, which should lead to admiration, love, duty, dependence, adoration, acknowledgment, and a desire of further knowledge, and vision of what in this world man can take in by borrowed ideas only.

If the mechanism of Nature had not been revealed to man, he possibly never would have discovered it to any certainty; at least, would not have discovered it for ages: and so long those incentives to admiration, love, service, and adoration, would have been wanting.

If the mechanism could have been understood, without the further discovery that this self-moving machine is no more than an inanimate piece of clock-work, created, as well as put together, by the supreme, intelligent, beneficent Being, it might have led man to place his admiration

miration and worship on the machine, in place of him that made it, as the mistaken part of mankind always did.

And therefore, if before mankind could know the obligations he had to the supreme intelligent Being as his Redeemer, that is, before the fall, the sole light he could view him in, to produce admiration, love, duty, service, and desire of further union, was that of the infinitely wise, powerful, and beneficent Creator and Supporter; it seems necessary to conclude, that those discoveries, which he could not make of himself, certainly were made to him.

And this the rather, that as man was the last piece formed of the creation, and as even his body was framed before the soul, without which it could not perceive, was breathed into it, he could not have any mean to know how, where, or by whom or what this world and all its tenants were produced; and, by the nature of the thing, could not in many ages, if at all, arrive at any knowledge of what was certainly intended to be the object of his meditation, and the cause of his love, duty, and service.

Wherefore, as it was necessary he should speedily be instructed, our Author thinks *Moses* has intimated to us that he was, in telling us that God was pleased to plant a garden for him, which he was to cultivate and keep. Our Author, observing that gardens amongst the ancient nations, and planted groves, were sacred, and places of worship; reflecting that it was but a poor employment for the chief of the creation to cultivate a garden, whilst the earth, not being yet cursed, nor man doomed to hard labour, might produce spontaneously fruits fit for him, especially the trees being of God's own planting; and observing that the words translated *to till* and *to keep*, also properly signify *to worship* and *observe*; and taking in a great many other circumstances, too numerous to be here recited, concludes, that this garden was planted and dressed in the form of a plan or scheme, to shew the situations, motions, and actions of the heavenly bodies, and the powers in this system, picture-ways, or hieroglyphically,

phically, for man's comprehending and remembering more certainly the positions, motions, and influences of the heavenly bodies, and the actions of fire, light, and air, or, as our Author calls it, spirit, in circulation. Several of those bodies, or of the effects flowing from their motions or situations, and from the circulation of light and air, might be represented by trees of different forms, or growths; and the circulation might itself be represented by some of those trees, or perhaps by the waters in *Eden*, which by the four rivers were plentifully furnished.

And as the Author understands this garden to have been for instruction, and the intent of *Moses's* recording that circumstance to be, to let us know that man was so instructed; so he lays a pretty deal of weight upon another matter, related in the same history, of God's bringing the several animals before *Adam*, to the end he might give them proper names.

As the names *Adam* gave to animals were expressive of the chief talents or instincts of those animals, and afterwards in the *Hebrew* language came generally to be roots for words to signify the passions, actions, or inclinations which those instincts or talents raised the ideas of; our Author concludes that God caused these animals to exhibit to *Adam*, for his information and instruction, their several qualities, particularities, and instincts, to help him forward in the knowledge that was to be communicated to him.

Our Author then perceiving clearly, that a system of Natural Philosophy, or a description of this machine, was published by *Moses*, when Revelation was, as he terms it, republished in writing; observing that there was full as much occasion, or rather more, for a discovery of this system to *Adam*, before he had opportunities to make observations, than afterwards; and discovering the true sense and meaning of those intimations that *Moses* gives, concerning the transactions in the garden of *Eden*; concludes that *Adam* was by God instructed in the knowledge of the powers and operations of this system, and of the duty and regard owing to the Author of it, as well as of so much of the nature, powers, and attributes of the
Author

Author and Creator of it, as the children of *Israel* were acquainted with, by the republication of Revelation by *Moses*, in writing.

As to the manner of this first Revelation, our Author, proceeding upon the principles already mentioned, that man is incapable of any ideas but what are taken in by the senses, concludes that God could not give to man, whilst clogged with a body, the true idea of himself, or any otherwise represent himself, than by referring for a similitude to that thing in this material system that bore the nearest resemblance in perfection, power, nature and operation; and therefore he supposes, what he afterwards affirms he has proved, that, to give man some image or likeness of himself, he pointed to the machine by which this system is supported; the heavens consisting of matter in three different conditions, fire, light, and air, or spirit, as the Author calls it, which mutually support each other, and necessarily concur in the joint action of that powerful machine, by which every material thing is moved, supported, and preserved; exhibiting thereby some similitude, from whence an idea might be taken of his essence, personality, power, and manner of action.

As *Adam* gave names to all living creatures, and the use and intent of a name is, to raise in the hearer an idea of the thing named; our Author supposes, that every other creature, that came within the cognisance of the first man, had also a name given to it; and insists, that the heavens, or the machine, described as above, was by *Adam* called *The Names*, by way of eminence, to signify that they were the representatives of the Deity, that from which the idea of him was to be taken. *Shem* in the Hebrew language signifies *name*, and he avers that *shemim* is the masculine plural of that noun, and signifies properly *names*; and by this he understands that the heavens, or *shemim*, were always thought of, and spoken of, by those who were rightly informed by Revelation, as the representation or material object expressive of the Deity.

If mankind was thus instructed in the powers and operations of Nature, the lesson would not soon, or easily wear

wear out ; because every observation, every symptom in Nature would, day after day, justify it : but the fact, that this knowledge was revealed, might soon be forgotten by the succeeding generations of men, or be disbelieved, and with it the knowledge of the invisible Author of all. Men who saw this machine perfect and self-moving, might doubt whether it had not self-existence in it ; and whether, as it was the immediate cause and producer of all their comforts, it was not the only powerful being to which they had any obligations, and owed duty and service ; whence, by degrees, worship might be misplaced, being transferred from the true invisible God to the visible representation of him, in which all power and perfection might be lodged, by the opinions of vain imaginary men, who forgot or disregarded Revelation.

That this in fact was the case, that the early deserters of the true God placed their worship and service on the heavens, the Author proves at great length, and with great strength of evidence, as a good deal of his reasoning depends on it.

If the Scriptures are to be decisive in this point, it is put beyond doubt, by the many formal declarations that the crime of the nations, and of the apostate *Israelites*, was their serving the Heavens, the Host of Heavens, the Queen of Heaven, as it is translated ; the sun, moon and stars ; and false Gods, *Baal, Moloch, &c.* which our Author shews were representations of some of the powers or attributes of the Heavens ; and by the many miracles wrought to convince mankind, that they misplaced their worship, and that the invisible God had those powers under his command.

And were their credit in any degree questionable, such remains as we have of the ancient Heathen worship would shew with abundant evidence, that, till they lost the knowledge of their Philosophy, (which happened by accidents largely described by our Author), they continually retained the powers or attributes of the heavens for the objects of their religious service.

Our Author admits, that the more modern Heathens, (by these he means the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and their successors

cessors in point of time), who had lost the knowledge of Nature, lost also the knowledge of the object of their worship, and the sense of the very names by which their gods were called or distinguished; so that, though they adored the air, they knew not for what: but then he avers, that the ancients (that is, all the nations that preceded the change of language, by which knowledge was retained) adored the heavens, or some powers in them, or attributes of them.

To this end he has collected the names of all the gods of the nations mentioned in Scripture, together with the names or titles of their temples, in his treatise of *the names and attributes of the Trinity of the Gentiles*, and has offered an examination and analysis of those names, together with some account of the services paid to those supposed deities, and the many reproaches made by the Prophets to their votaries and worshippers; which, with great evidence, seems to shew that these gods were indeed none other than the heavens, or some supposed powers in them.

The very general adoration paid by the ancients to the heavenly bodies; the worship of the sun, of fire, of light, &c. that prevailed in the earliest times; the conjectural Philosophy of the late Heathens, the *Greeks* and *Romans*, which centred in opinions, that by their *Jupiter*, *Apollo*, &c. was meant either the *æther*, or the sun, or the active force of Nature in general, justifies, to those who value such authorities, our Author's sentiments.

Our Author is out of humour with those who fancy the ancients such idiots as to have worshipped brutes, reptiles, insects, or any inanimate things.

Let the worship in *Egypt* be an instance. The respect they had to *Apis*, to a bull or cow, was not at all paid to that animal. All mankind knows in relation to *Egypt*, because their monuments were better preserved than those of other nations, that they wrote by hieroglyphicks; that is, that they expressed their ideas by representing the figures of animals, or of inanimate things, of circles, triangles, &c. in such series and order, as to convey their meaning; in so doing, they must fix upon some things easily

easily distinguished, to represent what could not so easily be painted, or by figure expressed. And if their fancy led them to express the fire at the sun, by the front or head of a bull or heifer, the respect shewed to that animal was evidently meant to the fire at the sun; and the *Egyptians* did not worship the bull or heifer, but the sun; no more than in their hieroglyphical writing a bull or serpent was meant, when the figures of those animals were represented.

Our Author goes through a great many mistakes of the moderns in this particular, which are dishonourable to the understandings of the ancients, and amongst these takes notice particularly of one, *viz.* the reproach to the *Egyptians*, that they worshipped an onion; and indeed the Scripture upbraids the *Israelites* with their lusting after the onions of *Egypt*.

But our Author says, the moderns will cease to abuse the ancients on this score, when they take the trouble to cut up the common onion, and to satisfy their own eyes that it consists of seven different spheres, or *involutura*, one within another, in the way that the ancients understood the seven spheres in this system; and was therefore more proper than any other thing that can be thought of, to represent the solar system in their hieroglyphical writings, and religious representation.

He takes notice, that, from the hieroglyphical representation of the heavens, or perhaps of fire, amongst the *Egyptians* by *Apis*, the *Israelites* calf of gold in the wilderness, and the brace of calves of *Jeroboam*, who had his education in *Egypt*, sprang: not that the *Israelites* at first, or *Jeroboam* afterwards, dreamed of any powers or virtues in those calves; but that they imagined, they put themselves thereby under the protection of the heavens, of which they took that idol to be the approved emblem.

To all their hieroglyphical representations of their Deity, he observes they added a crown by way of ornament or distinction; (as for much the same reason, tho' in another respect, which he elsewhere explains, they did to their priests). This crown was a circle of gold, the
most

most precious metal ; from which arose, quite round the circumference, plates of gold, formed like pyramids, imitating rays of light ; and in the intervals, between those shining rays, spaces of the same pyramidal form, but pointed inwards, to represent, as our Author says, the irradiation or flux of the light outwards from the sun, and the pressure or return of the air or spirit inwards, by which he insists this machine is supported.

And, in a great many more of their ornaments and emblems, he finds evident traces of what their Service and Religion pointed at, to wit, a recognition of the powers in the heavens, as that from whence all their blessings flowed, and on which all their dependence was settled.

As this mistaking, which, in effect, is denying the true God, was evidently the crime of those Heathens who were contemporary with the *Israelitish* state ; so, our Author thinks, it was the offence of the antediluvian world, for which men merited to be cut off all but one family. His reasons for so thinking are numerous, but what to me appears the strongest, is drawn from the punishment ; which was, as our Author insists, the controuling the settled operations of the powers that were supposed to be independent and omnipotent : the destroying the earth, and with it rebellious man ; the reforming the earth after that dissolution, and preserving those persons by whom it was to be re-peopled, from the general ruin, to be witnesses for God of the power by him exerted, and to instruct their posterity in the service of that Being by whom they were preserved.

Our Author talks of destroying the earth, which, he says, is in formal words affirmed by *Moses* : he speaks of forcing up the waters of the abyss through apertures, which, he says, were left for a communication with the waters above ; dissolving the shell, reforming it with new apertures and fissures, and sending back those waters again through cracks and fissures in the shell of stone, that environed the abyss, to their former residence : he speaks also of great quantities of terrestrial matter carried down through those fissures and openings, along with the
waters

waters into the abyſs; that matter formed at the centre of the hollow ſphere into a ſolid orb, like to a kernel floating in the waters, and very many effects in the motion of the waters, and of this earth, to be accounted for by that collection of waters, and this floating orb; all which, he aſſerts, are to be gathered from what the Scripture reveals, and will account mechanically for the many various appearances, which hitherto have been only gueſſed at, from ſchemes founded on falſe and impoſſible principles.

As an inſtance of the perfection of the natural knowledge that is to be met with in the Scriptures, and of the abſurdity of thoſe who charge the writers of them with ignorance, he avers, that the loadſtone and its effects are frequently, at leaſt ſix times, directly ſpoken of; that the reaſon and cauſe of the myſterious phænomena of magnetiſm are clearly to be gathered from the Revealed Philoſophy.

And, however Freethinkers may make the ſtory of the flood an objection to the veracity of the Scriptures, and may laugh at the account which our Author gives of it from the ſacred writers, he affirms, that as he has had the curioſity to make collections of moſt of the different ſorts of things, and each of the ſame ſort differently formed, under ground, and numerous obſervations on the ſituation of things in the bowels of the earth; he can, by evidence to the eye, convince any rational man, that the account he gives of the deſtruction at the flood, and reformation of the earth, from the Scriptures, is graphically true.

Noah and his family, who had remained in dutiful allegiance to the inviſible God, were, doubtleſs, by this powerful piece of vengeance over the rebellious world, convinced of the ſupremacy of the Deity over his rival the Heavens, whole power they had ſeen ſuſpended, and baffled; and their poſterity continued dutiful till the time of building the tower of *Babel*, when Nature and Imagination began to work again.

All tranſlations have made a very odd ſpot of work of this piece of hiſtory. They have ſuppoſed it ſays, that, before

before this accident, all men spoke the same language ; that, afraid of another deluge, they set about building a tower, whose top should reach to the heavens ; that they did this to get them a name ; and that God became so jealous of this attempt, that it was worth his while to work a very extraordinary miracle, to confound their language, so as one could not understand what the other said, and to disperse them over the face of the earth : and from this notable event the birth of many languages, and the first peopling of many nations, is sought.

Our Author, who insists that a perfect knowledge of the Hebrew language will deliver the Scripture from many absurdities, with which it is by the translations saddled, says,

In the first place, the text does not bear that all the earth was of one language, or that their language was confounded. It says, indeed, that all the earth was of one *shaphab*, lip ; and afterwards that God said he would confound their lip.

Now, our Author observes what, upon comparing all the texts, holds very truly, that the *Hebreus* had two words of nearly the same signification to those that did not advert to the distinction ; *leshun*, which signifies tongue, and *shaphab*, which signifies lip : but which, in the propriety of their expression, they never confounded ; using *leshun*, perpetually, to signify language, and *shaphab* to signify religious service, or confession, and never to signify language. All therefore the text says, is, that, before the building of *Babel*, the whole earth had one and the same religious service or confession ; and that, upon that attempt, the new confession, which the projectors of this building intended to set up, was to be confounded, which began in the dispersion of the undertakers.

In the next place, the translators render the text as if it said, *Let us build us a tower, whose top shall reach to the heavens, that we may make us a name, lest we be dispersed, &c.* And surely, besides other improprieties in this supposed design, it must appear a very ridiculous project, to build a tower, that should defend against destruction by a flood, in so very low a ground as the valley of *Shinar* ; or from dispersion, which want of provision would

force them to. But our Author observes, that the *Hebrew* text says nothing of reaching to the heavens; that word is a meer supplement from the translators fancy, who were ignorant that the word rendered *tower* signifies *temple*, and therefore did not perceive the obvious meaning of the whole; which is, that these wicked men, who lived in a country where, till then, there was no difference of religion, the whole earth being of one confession, apostatised to the service and worship of the heavens; and encouraged one another to build a city and temple, the top whereof should be sacred to the heavens; and that God, to check this early relapse into the Religion of their antediluvian forefathers, thought fit to confound, not their language, but their confession or liturgy, that is, to make them differ about the manner and form of the intended service and worship; which had the effect, at that time, of marring their irreligious project; of making them fall out amongst themselves, of making them desist from their enterprise.

Taking the thing thus, and supposing these men mistook the heavens for a deity, there was sense in their building a temple, and on it an altar, to that being that could, according to their supposition, prevent their destruction and dispersion: and it was well and mercifully done, on the part of God, to make them differ about their intended service, and thereby to fall out amongst themselves, and relinquish the undertaking. But, translating the text as our expositors have done, a most absurd and impracticable attempt is supposed to call upon the interposition of the Deity, in a very unnecessary miracle; which, at the same time, our Author avers, appears not to have been wrought; because the same Scriptures shew, the whole earth was of one language, tho' not of one lip or religious confession, for several ages after.

As our Author has delivered the Scriptures, by his acquaintance with *Hebrew*, from this notorious absurdity, with which the ignorance of the translators had stained it; he, on an infinity almost of other occasions, interposes to set their false interpretations to rights. According to his construction of the language, it is no where in

in the text said, that the earth stands still, and that the sun goes round it; but, on the contrary, it is, on every proper occasion, inculcated that the sun stands still, fixed, and that the earth runs round.

After the flood God did not put the rainbow first in the cloud, as a sign to man; but he constituted, or gave (which is the *Hebrew* word) that bow, which naturally was in the cloud, as a memorial of his promise not to destroy the earth again by water.

And in multitudes of other cases our Author brings, as he says, from the genuine construction of the text, a very commodious sense, where the translation is, not to say worse, hardly intelligible.

As our Author's general proposition, that the mechanical powers in the heavens was the Deity set up by the Heathen, against the God of Nature and of *Israel*, is a key to the understanding a vast number of expressions, expostulations, and claims used throughout by the writers of the Scriptures, which passed unheeded, or were thought trivial, and accommodated to the mistaken notions of ignorant men heretofore; so the same position, as he manages it, is of very great service in shewing the propriety and perfect intention and use of very many miracles, miraculous appearances, and religious institutions, which no man hitherto has pretended to shew the adequate reason, use, or occasion for.

If the Religion of the rebellious Heathen was to ascribe all power to the machine of the heavens, in the conditions of fire, light, and air, or spirit, but principally in that of fire, on the acting whereof all the rest seemed to depend; then it was proper for the Deity, when a new Revelation and religious economy was to be established in the family of *Abraham*, to pass between the parts of the creatures appointed to be divided, in the appearance of fire, light, and smoke.

It was proper to shew his superiority over the gods of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, by punishing them who worshipped fire, by fire sent from heaven: it was proper, when *Moses* was to be sent upon his mission, to appear to him in the bush in the form of fire.

It was proper, when the contest was between the Priests of *Baal* and the Prophet *Elisha*, and when the formal trial was to be, whether *Baal* or *Jehovah* was the true God, by this test, whether the offering of the one or of the other should be first consumed by fire sent from heaven; it was proper, I say, in that case, for *Jehovah* to give proof of his power, by sending down fire, and consuming the sacrifice, water, &c. And,

Not to mention a great many other instances, when the Captains of fifty were successively sent out by the King of *Israel*, who then fell in with the worship of the heavens, in defiance of the true God, to bring *Elijah* to him a prisoner; it was proper to punish their presumption, and to manifest the power of *Jehovah* over the heavens, to consume those Captains by fire sent from heaven.

And though the many miracles wrought in *Egypt*, and in the wilderness, to which, for evidence of the power and supremacy of *Jehovah*, there are many references and appeals made by the later writers of the Scriptures, seem to our modern wisemen, who think that God might have done the business a much shorter way, very unnecessary and superfluous, and as such are disbelieved; yet our Author apprehends they were absolutely necessary to the design of *Jehovah*, and of the utmost importance to mankind, for settling the point in dispute, between the followers of the true, and those of the false God.

The intent of these various miracles, our Author says, was, in the face and seeing of the most powerful and populous, the most learned, the most superstitiously addicted nation then in the world to the service of the heavens, to shew the power of *Jehovah* over their pretended Gods in all their attributes and powers, and over their Priests; and, in so doing, to convict that people, and all that should hear of those transactions, and still remain in the same error; and to convince the people that he was about to separate to himself, so fully of his authority, that they should never (bearing these things in mind) apostatise.

For these ends, after the Magicians or Priests of the fictitious Gods were foiled, *Jehovah* permitted *Pharaoh* to harden

harden his heart, or to resist; until by repeated miracles he had, to the sight of all men, asserted his superiority over his rivals, in controuling all the actions and powers for which they were falsely thought Gods, and making them afflict their votaries. The sun and light were turned into a palpable darkness, for three days. The air was turned pestilential; the very dust of the earth was turned noxious; the river, which was emblematically sacred, in whose waters they purified themselves, and on whose banks they worshipped, was turned into blood; the wind brought locusts to destroy the votaries of the wind. All these plagues, and many more, which our Author explains the propriety of at length in his *Essay towards a Natural History of the Bible*, were so directed as to leave the *Israelites*, unhurt, witnesses of the superiority of their God, of the obedience of the heavens, and of the distraction and folly of those who worshipped them.

Hitherto miracles have been looked upon, generally, by mankind, as so many prodigious, unnatural, and therefore wonderful events, surpassing the power of man to compass; brought about by divine power, to vouch the mission of the person by whose hands they were wrought, and to gain credit to what he should reveal, or deliver. But, if our Author is to be followed, they are to be considered as tending to a higher purpose, and are so many manifestations of the power of the true God; to gain credit to himself, in contradiction to the pretended powers of the heavens, that were set up in opposition: and are so sorted and chosen, as best to prove that there is no inherent essential powers in the machine, the heavens; but that all inherent and essential power is in *Jehovah* alone; whose servants, at his command, could alter or suspend the course of Nature.

It was, according to our Author, to confirm the children of *Israel* in this faith, that the wind (in *Hebrew* the spirit) separated the waters of the *Red* sea, and made them, contrary to the ordinary course of Nature, stand on either side in heaps; that, by *Moses*, *Jehovah* shewed, in miniature, the same power that was exercised in destroying the earth at the flood, by cracking the strata of

of stone, and making a spring of water gush out of a rock, upon the touch of a rod; that the God of the nations, in the appearance of fire, light, and cloud, or spirit, which the Author says (as shall be hereafter explained) was the emblem of the true God, was forced to attend, to lead, and to protect the camp of *Israel*; that the air was made to rain down food upon the armies of *Jehovah*; and that *Jehovah* was pleased, miraculously, and at an appointed time, to shew himself in the appearance of fire on *Sinai*, and from thence to deliver the law, and offer a covenant to the *Israelites*.

If all these things shall be understood to be done to settle the contest, and establish the authority of *Jehovah* over the heavens, his rivals at that time, and all other pretended deities that thereafter might, by the madness or ignorance of men, be set up;

Then the scope and intent of the law, given in the Ten Commandments, will be better understood; and the meaning of the religious economy, ceremonies, and services, that thereafter were established, will be more fully comprehended.

The first four Commands, by the confession of every body, are intended to assert and inculcate the sovereignty of the Deity, and the exclusive title to service that is in *Jehovah*, the creator and preserver of all things; in contradiction to all other pretended gods, whose service is prohibited and guarded against in the most express manner; prohibitions that do not seem necessary to be authorised and introduced with so much pomp, and by so many miracles, if the worship of a stock or a stone, a red heifer or a calf, taken in themselves, and not considered as the representation of that being (the heavens) in which all material power in this system was known to reside, had been the only thing to be dreaded.

The other Commands are generally called the Moral Law, and it is commonly thought that they were intended for a system of social law, as they seem to prohibit trespasses against society.

But in this our Author differs, and says, that when men

men are satisfied, as they may easily be from Scripture and from history, that the worshippers of the heavens called their gods their fathers and mothers, and worshipped them as such; that they held it a religious and acceptable service to immolate human sacrifices, nay to offer their first-born to fire; that they held it lawful, nay pleasing to some of their gods, to steal and rob for sacrifice; that prostitution of their wives and daughters, in honour of their gods, was a flagrant part of their religion. *Es* the reasons for giving these commands, commonly called moral, will appear to be the same as for giving the rest, to wit, to settle and establish the worship of the true, though invisible God, and to restrain from the worship of the heavens, and the chief abominations practised in that worship.

As to the Moral or social Law, according to our Author, it was not the immediate view or purpose of God, in the Law given from the mount, to establish or explain it. The competition for superiority with the false god, the heavens, was the point to be settled; and the abominations of the prophane worship of that fictitious god were to be prohibited, and eradicated out of the service of the children of *Israel*.

The social law required no publication, no authority from *Jehovah* by miracles to confirm it; except in those points in which the absurd service of the Heathens had encroached upon it. It was no question amongst the Heathens, no more than it was amongst the children of *Abraham*, whether it was unlawful to kill, or to commit adultery, on any other occasion, except for the honour of their pretended deities in religious service; and therefore, according to our Author, there was no occasion for settling these social duties, excepting so far as the mistakes in worship made it necessary.

As the principal view of the Decalogue, and all the pomp and train of miracles with which it was introduced, was to settle the superiority of *Jehovah* over his rivals, the heavens; so our Author observes, that all the memorials of these miracles, the services, feasts, sabbaths, rites of sacrifice, ceremonies, the tabernacle, the temple,

temple, their ornaments and furniture, the institution of priesthood, with the ordinances relating thereto, the priest's garments, &c. were intended to commemorate, to acknowledge, and for ever to keep in view the evidence of the superiority then settled; and to explain by emblems, a sort of language then well understood, the nature, residence, and manner of acting of God, in opposition to that of his rivals; and his merciful disposition and purpose towards his creatures: all which the Author has in a great measure explained, and applied in a very new and surprising manner; and promises, on a proper occasion, fully to explain and shew the application of the rest.

Though a system of Philosophy, Religion and religious Service was thus revealed in writing by the hand of *Moses* in the wilderness, as our Author affirms; yet he is far from thinking that the world was left without information or direction in these matters till this time; on the contrary, he asserts, that the instruction and Law given by *Moses*, was no more than a republication in writing of that Law originally given to *Adam*, before, and upon the fall.

From the goodness, the wisdom, and the justice of God; from the necessities of the new-made creature man, and from the hints above mentioned, of God's planting a garden in *Eden*, and bringing all living creatures before *Adam*; our Author concludes, that Nature, its operations, and dependence on *Jehovah*, was fully explained to the first man; and thence his duty, as well as chief good, discovered to him, in admiring, adoring, and with love and gratitude serving the Author of his being.

Whether any, and what services, by way of acknowledgment, were at this time required of *Adam*, does not appear; but it does appear that he was prohibited, under the penalty of death, from eating of the fruit of a certain tree in the middle of the garden, which is called *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*.

Our Author supposes that this tree, said to stand in the middle of the garden, was, in the plan of that garden,

den, intended to represent the sun in the centre of this system, which keeps it all a-going; and that the prohibition to eat the fruit of it, emblematically forewarned *Adam* from trusting to its support in any thing, but what, as a machine without knowledge, it was appointed to do; and he suspects that this very forbidden fruit was the *malum Persicum* famed amongst the Heathens; in *Greece* afterwards taken to be the laurel, sacred to *Apollo*, the God of Wisdom, and which was supposed capable of giving knowledge and wisdom.

He observes that this command was first broken by *Eve*, (who had it but at second hand from *Adam*, and who did it not know the natures and several qualities and capacities of brute creatures, as *Adam* did), at the instigation of the devil, by a serpent, who as a bait proposed improvement in knowledge; a very laudable motive, had not the method of gaining it been prohibited.

He imagines that *Adam* was not deceived as *Eve* was; but that seeing her lost, his passion for her made him desperately resolve to share the same fortune with her, and to be joined with her in the crime and the punishment: and that this was the reason why, when their eyes were opened, they not only became ashamed of their crime, but at the sight of those parts which raised in each mutual desires; the violence of which induced woman to seduce man into a participation of her guilt, and induced man to yield to ruin and death, rather than be divided from her.

Those who are delighted with searching into the origin and usage of words, will not be disagreeably entertained by a reflection or two our Author makes on this occasion. He says that *even*, which properly signifies the act of cohabitation with woman, is in the *Hebrew* language made the root for iniquity or wickedness; and that *petah*, which principally signifies that part of the body that *Eve* is supposed to have hid, in the same language is made expressive of seducing, over-persuading, deceiving.

And our Author thinks, that, to keep up the memory of

of this crime, and of the principal motive that induced man to fall into it; as also to be a caveat against being carried too far by that motive, on future occasions, circumcision was instituted; which took place amongst the nations before *Abraham's* days, and was revived only in his family; and re-enacted in the law of *Moses*, as several other ancient institutions were.

Our Author insists, that man could not have sustained his life any considerable time after the fall, though God had not been pleased by any act to inflict death upon him. The consciousness of the displeasure of God, the remembrance of felicity lost, and the apprehensions of the just vengeance of the offended Deity, must have produced strange distractions in the mind of unhappy *Adam*. That he lived, then, is a demonstration that he received some comfort, some hint of the possibility of a reconciliation; and that he actually had promises that comforted him, the Scriptures in formal words reveal: *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.*

Though the account of this promise and those hopes of peace is very short, yet our Author thinks, that, at this time, a proper and intelligible account was given to man of the manner and means of his reconciliation, and restitution to the protection of God; and that rites, observances, and services were instituted, to keep in mind, and acknowledge the sovereignty of the Creator; the crime of man, and his forfeiture; and the promise and means of peace and salvation.

The foundations of his opinion, besides what is already said, are in general: That from the Scripture it appears, before the publication of the Law in *Sinai*, Believers and Unbelievers were in the practice and possession of many, or most of those rites and institutions; which must have depended on some antecedent authority, that was common to all. And by the universal consent of all prophane authors it appears, that after the era of *Moses*, the same institutions and observances had taken place over all the known world; though no body supposes they owed their origin to the laws of a nation that the rest of the world held in dislike and contempt.

To instance in a few ; Offering sacrifice, and that by fire, was in use before the written Law : *Abel* offered ; *Noah* sacrificed ; *Abraham* and his contemporaries did so ; *Job* practised it ; it was used by *Balaam* : it was practised for thanksgiving ; for atonement ; for binding covenants : at the same time it is obvious, that naturally it had no tendency to either of those ends ; and, as it was universal, must needs owe its beginning to an institution, that was authoritative over all.

That sacrifice was held propitiatory among the Heathens, cannot be denied by any that is conversant in their writings ; their histories, their poems are full of it : and, if there could remain any doubt, *Balaam's* repeated attempts to placate the Deity, and the over-warm zeal of those who gave the fruit of their body for the sin of their soul ; who sacrificed their first-born to *Molech*, to atone for themselves, their family, and people, and to procure his favour and protection, are absolute proofs.

Our Author, on this subject, takes notice, that God is said to have clothed our first parents with the skins of beasts, that part of the offering that by the written Law appears to have fallen to the Priest's share ; and thence concludes, that the beasts, from which those skins were taken, had been sacrificed.

Another instance is in first-fruits, which appear amongst all the Heathen to have been offered as an acknowledgment to their several deities. The practice is as old as the days of *Cain* and *Abel*, who cannot be supposed to have begun it without institution for their authority.

A third instance is in the institution of priesthood, or giving to the first-born, or eldest of the family, a right to approach the altar, and to offer sacrifice ; which in the *Jewish* dispensation was changed from the first-born to the family of *Levi*. If the Priest was, in one consideration, a representation of the same person, that the sacrifice represented in another, it is reasonable to conclude, that the institution of priesthood, and of sacrifice, bore the same date.

From the expression, *Gen. iv. 3.* our Author collects, that there were appointed times, perhaps new moons, and
set-

settled feasts, from the beginning, for sacrifice, service, and acknowledgment.

And, from *Moses's* account of the creation, and what followed it, nothing is more clear, than that the rest of the Sabbath was from the beginning appointed, for preserving a perpetual memorial of the creation, completed by *Jehovah*: and for yielding to man a fit opportunity, free from labour, toil and care, to contemplate the high and beneficent attributes of God in his works; and to dispose the mind to acknowledgment, duty, love, praise and adoration, the only tribute that is truly suited to the nature of that perfect Being; and the only exercise that seems proper for qualifying man to desire, and to enjoy a nearer union with his God.

As our Author finds, in the written Law, several particular sorts of wood, distinguished by their uses in the tabernacle; and several sorts of boughs and branches of trees, appointed to be carried and used in the feast of Tabernacles; he concludes, that those trees were, in the days of *Adam*, so to speak, consecrated as emblems or memorials of particular persons, actions, or things, that they were to represent.

A garden was planted in *Eam*; and I have hinted at the use for which our Author thinks it was dressed there. The patriarchs, particularly *Abram*, sacrificed under oaks; nay planted oaks for the end of sacrifice and religious service under them. The ancients planted gardens, groves, &c. upon religious accounts; and very likely held particular trees in respect, as representing particular powers or actions.

The oak, which is in *Hebrew elah*, our Author says, was appointed the memorial of a covenant confirmed by oath.

The tree of knowledge of good and evil, represented the powers in this system. The fruit of the last, as our Author says, with boughs of the first; branches of the palm-tree, and twigs of several other trees, were to be held in the hands of the children of *Israel* at the feast of Tabernacles, their grand festivity for mirth and rejoicing: and he insists, that the carrying those several boughs and
fruits

fruits had a religious emblematical meaning, then very well understood; as it was the only way, before writing, of communicating knowledge; and as intelligible, very near, as writing was afterwards. Because these emblems were then so fully understood, the meaning of them is not by *Moses* explained: but our Author seems to think it possible still to decypher and explain them; only thus much he apprehends is plain from the reflection made, that the use of those several sorts of trees being prescribed, without any explication of the reason or purpose, these purposes must have been universally known at the time, and the trees themselves must have been constituted emblems, as early as the planting the first garden.

As hieroglyphicks, or emblems, were the first method of conveying and continuing knowledge, which was succeeded by the more perfect invention of writing; and as all religious service was originally performed in an emblematical way, which carried the mind from the emblem, type, or emblematical or typical act, to the person or thing represented; our Author thinks, that after writing was invented, for the more certain preservation of divine knowledge, the services were still continued, and performed in the old way, and types and emblems were of the same use and effect as ever; hence sacrifice, &c. were continued; and, at the same time that God described the powers of this system, as dependent upon himself, in writing, he caused the same sort of account of them to be represented, and hung up hieroglyphically in the tabernacle, and afterwards in the temple. The lamp in the temple, the pillars, and their ornaments before the porch, our Author insists, were an hieroglyphical description of the powers of this system, of the deities the Heathens adored, which *Jehovah* willed to be nailed up in the place of the residence of his presence, to bear in mind their inferiority and dependence on him; and that they were to be considered in no other view than as emblems of himself; and his servants.

As our Author, by this new and very surprising manner of interpretation, gives light to an infinite number of institutions, prohibitions, declarations, claims and servi-

ces; so, by accurately examining the force and propriety of the original language, and comparing it with the institutions and services, when rightly understood, he thinks he has made a world of very important discoveries.

Various are the guesses that have been made by learned men, concerning the sense and meaning of the word *Jehovah*, the ineffable name of God, as the *Jews* call it. Our Author has fixed on that construction which makes it the essence existing, that essence or substance which has being in itself necessarily, without dependence upon any other, and in distinction to all other essence or substance whatever. *Jah* signifies the essence, by eminence; and (if I reach the Author's meaning, which seems to be wholly new and uncommon on this article) by the addition of the other word *Hovab*, signifying actual being with powers and faculties, gives an idea of that sufficient all-perfect Being, that has existence in itself, or by the necessity of its own nature exists. Something like to this, ingenious moderns have struck out by the light of Nature, as they say, for the idea of the sovereign Being: and it will be no great reproach to their notion, if it falls in with the sentiment contained in the name given by God to himself in the Scripture; nor a slight confirmation of the accuracy and perfection of the Scripture, if, when it is fairly examined, it is found to express sentiments so just, so lofty, and so difficult, if at all possible, to be come at by the light of Nature only.

El is another name which the Scripture gives to the Deity. It commonly is translated *the strong*, or *powerful*, *fortis*. But our Author insists, that it signifies properly the irradiator; an idea borrowed from that irradiation or emission of light and influence from the sun, to move, support, and preserve, in being and action, every thing in this material system: from whence it is applied to the Deity, to express something of that inconceivable power, influence, and manner of acting, by which the Deity acts uncontrollably where it is not locally present; as the Author from Scripture avers the proper residence of God is without this system: so that by this name, that irradiation, which, according to our Author's Philosophy, is in

a great measure the supporter of Nature, is attributed to *Jehovah*; and such a power of irradiation in a spiritual sense, as we see performed by the sun in a material way, is ascribed to the invisible God.

To confirm this sentiment, and indeed a very considerable branch of our Author's scheme, he observes, that the word *Hallelu-jah*, which is the burden of almost all the psalms of praise and thanksgiving, the first word frequently and the last; and which is translated sometimes, *Praise ye the Lord*, sometimes is transcribed, without translation, *Hallelujah*; signifies properly and undoubtedly *Irradiation to Jah*, or, *Ascribe ye irradiation to the Essence*. Now, if the utmost honour the believing *Jews* could express for their God, in their most devout and thankful praises, was to ascribe irradiation to his essence; it, on the one hand, renders our Author's opinion of the sense of *El* very probable; and, on the other hand, very strongly proves, that the Scripture-ideas of the Deity, and of its powers and action, were borrowed from visible operations of the sun, the light, and air, and their actions in the heavens in all this material system.

There is still another name for God, the most commonly used of any in Scripture, and on the true sense of which our Author builds a great deal; it is *Elohim*, always translated *Deus*, or God.

All the world, *Jews* and *Christians*, agree that this word is plural; seldom, not once in five hundred times, to be met with singular; almost always (a few instances excepted) joined with nouns and verbs in the singular number.

From this word, which the modern *Jews*, and, after them, *Christians*, have translated *Deus*, in the singular number, when the true God is meant; but *Dii*, in the plural, when it is applied to the gods of the nations; several learned men have drawn arguments for the Trinity, and have taken it to be a full proof, at least, of the plurality of persons. But as these men did not assert, or undertake to prove, that the Scriptures were wrote with perfect accuracy, and were forced to admit a great many things to be written that they could not strictly and phi-

Iosophically justify ; and as they pretended to fix no certain origin or sense for the word, from the meaning whereof their argument could be examined or justified, these opinions made no great way to induce men to think that the doctrine of the Trinity was founded in the *Old Testament*.

But, as our Author insists, that every word of the sacred book is written with the utmost accuracy, truth and perfection ; if that proposition is made good, what he says of the word *Elohim*, for evidence of the plurality of persons in the Deity, must have great weight.

Notwithstanding an infinity of guesses made by those who pretended to be learned in the *Hebrew* language, none ever hit on any thing that carried a sense, in the least degree, satisfactory ; our Author has fixed on the word *elab*, an oath or adjuration, (so translated perpetually by the *Jews*, where-ever it occurs in the Scriptures, whether as verb or noun, except where it is intended to signify the Deity, and then they take care to hide that meaning), as the root from which it is derived ; and affirms, that, by the genius of the language, *Elohim* signifies, in the plural, *adjuratores*, persons bound by oath or covenant : referring this name to that engagement which the divine persons are supposed to have entered into, for the preservation and salvation of man, called *the covenant* ; and averring, that it is expressive of that relation in which that oath or covenant put God to man.

He insists, that as this was the original light, in which, after the fall, God was willing to be known to man, for his comfort, and for encouraging him in his duty, all the apostate Heathens, who relinquished the true *Elohim*, and resorted to their rivals the heavens for protection, retained, nevertheless, this comfortable appellation, applied it to the heavens, and, as they sacrificed with the utmost zeal and seriousness to them, looked upon them as their *Elohim*, all-powerful beings, in covenant with them, for their good here and hereafter, and expected certainly from their hands protection, and performance of their supposed covenants. Hence by innumerable places in Scripture it appears, that they looked upon themselves

as bound never to relinquish their *Elohim*; and verily believed that their *Elohim*, in their turn, were bound never to desert them.

It is remarkable, that, of the many names which the Deity has in Scripture, this is the only one, which concerns the salvation of man, that the Heathens carried off with them to apply to their false gods: for whom they coined other additional, or distinguishing names, without number, according to their different humours, and the different powers and attributes of the heavens, for which they worshipped them; but still, with all these, they mixed the character or appellation of *Elohim*, as what expressed their connection with, and relation to them.

And if this term shall be allowed to mean persons bound by oath or covenant, then it will fit Kings or Governors, who were under such ties and engagements to the people; and to them it is sometimes applied in Scripture.

At whatever time the *Jews* thought fit first to translate this word singular, it is certain the Heathens retained it in the plural sense; and the *Jews*, when translating that word applied to the Heathen gods, render it plural.

Our Author observes, that the word *Elohim* is generally joined with verbs and nouns in the singular number; yet sometimes the words joined with it, determine the sense so flatly to be plural, that, without impropriety, such as is no where to be met with in the sacred book, the persons, or things spoken of, must necessarily be plural.

In the consultation that is represented to have been had by the *Elohim*, for the formation of man, in the first of *Genesis*, the *Elohim* said, *Let us make man in our image, according to our similitudes.*

And, *Genesis* iii. 22. after man had eaten of the forbidden fruit, the *Elohim* says, *Behold, man is become like one of us.* The meaning of the expression, and in what sense man was become like one of the *Elohim*, our Author, on another occasion, endeavours to explain: but from these, and such-like flat declarations of more persons

sons than one in the *Elohim*, he insists it is beyond doubt, that the word is intentionally used plural.

On this subject he makes great use of the representatives of the *Elohim*, the *stemim*, the names, the powers in the machine, the heavens, being plural; and those powers being, according to his apprehension, just three, fire, light, and spirit, or air: and if it is supposed, that these three powers support all the motions and actions in this machine, and that the machine was given for a representation of the Deity, its nature, manner of existence, powers and actions, by itself; it is very difficult to call in doubt our Author's conclusion, that the one substance of the heavens, acting in three conditions, or with distinct powers, is expressive of the one essence and personality of the *Elohim*.

And indeed, to do our Author's argument justice, supposing the received opinion of a Trinity in the Deity were to be illustrated, or represented, by the similitude of any visible or conceivable object; it must be confessed, that the wit of man has not hitherto suggested any thing so fit to throw light upon that high mystery, as this supposed machine; if the Author can make it good, that Nature is actually supported by the agency of matter in those three conditions of fire, light, and spirit, or air. The unity of the machine, the co-operation or joint action of all the three powers, light, the issue of fire, and yet coeval with it, returning spirit or air to maintain the joint action, and by it every thing, is so exquisite a picture of what hitherto has been thought to surpass all imagination, that, if the Author can maintain that his machine works by these powers, very few will doubt of the truth of what it was intended to represent.

That the Deity and the several Persons in it are, in numberless expressions of Scripture, uniformly represented by the machine, and by these three powers in it, applying the idea of fire to the First, the idea of light to the Second, and of air or spirit to the Third, the Author endeavours to prove by a world of quotations.

He does not forget the frequent appearances of the Deity in the form of fire, often attended with light,
and

and air, or cloud. He takes notice of the many descriptions of the First Person as terrible ; a jealous God ; the avenger of sin ; a flaming, a consuming, a devouring fire to the workers of iniquity : and has collected a list of the various temples that the Heathens had to the sun, to fire, or to the heavens, under that head or attribute.

With respect to light, he produces numerous passages, where light, represented or spoken of, seems properly applicable to that person who was to be the light of the nations, who was represented by irradiation ; and, perhaps, praised or prayed for in the expression *Hallelujah* ; and who declared formally of himself, that he was the light.

And, on this subject, our Author has one very uncommon reflection, as almost all his are. He says, the Word *cohen*, translated *priest*, and to which no one has pretended to affix a determined meaning, signifies properly an intercessor : and, in evidence of this, he has produced several texts, and particularly two, where the children of *David* are said to be his *cobenim*, meaning intercessors with him, it not being possible they could be priests, since they were not of the tribe of *Levi*.

After establishing that the word rendered *priest*, signifies intercessor ; he proceeds to observe, that the High Priest was only such, and employed in offering sacrifice, as the representative of him, concerning whom *Jehovah* swore, that he was a priest, or intercessor for ever, after the order of *Melechizedek*.

And then, to make that type or representation more entire, our Author observes, that the High Priest, in office, was to wear garments made by divine direction, emblematical in every particular of his office ; but more especially in that they were to be of white, that is linen, and gold, and purple, and scarlet, by that collection of colours expressing light, the badge or representation of the Second Person of the Deity.

This, as well as the crown that the priest wore, expressing irradiation, as before mentioned, our Author thinks was certainly understood at the time of the institution, and by Believers down till the days of our Saviour ;
and

and had it been generally then understood, the nation would not have rejected the light. But, as the *Jewish* people universally apostatised, lost their knowledge with their faith, and had the remains of it almost altogether extinguished in the captivity; they had leisure to frame notions of their Messiah, different from what the Scriptures exhibited; and in the constructions of the Scriptures, which they did not understand, they imposed on themselves, and on all that trusted them.

To the light, our Author shews, there were several temples amongst the Heathens.

Touching the Third Person, our Author produces several texts, where he is formally spoken of, under the description of *ruach, ventus, flatus, spiritus*, the spirit, of *Jehovah*. And, from the Heathens religion and opinions he observes, that they imputed all their advices, from their gods, to the spirit, to some material inspiration or inflation; all their Sybils, the priestesses that delivered their oracles, were supposed, in effect, to be blown up, and inflated by some spirit or wind. And it may be considered, whether it is of any consequence, and of what, that they delivered their answers from tripodes.

But, not to pursue, at any greater length, the numerous and the various authorities that our Author brings together to support his argument, it merits reflection, that, when our Saviour speaks of himself, as the light; and when he and his Apostles deliver the doctrine of the Trinity in the *New Testament*, they speak of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, without any apology or explication, as a matter very well known and understood by such as understood the Scriptures; a thing which it seems altogether impossible they could have fallen into, if they had not known, that such as really knew the Scriptures, understood them; as our Saviour says, on other occasions, *Matth. xi. 15. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.*

As our Author has pushed his argument for the Trinity very far, from the notion of fire, light, and spirit; so he lays great weight on another argument, not altogether unlike to that, drawn from the appearance of the cheru-

cherubim, set up at the expulsion of *Adam* from paradise, and from the description of that representation or appearance, drawn from the first and tenth chapters of the prophecies of *Ezekiel*.

From the visions of *Ezekiel* he collects, that the form of the cherubim was one figure, with four heads or faces; the face of an ox, the face of a lion, the face of a man, and the face of an eagle.

Had there been no more joined but the faces of the ox, the lion, and the eagle, as the Author can prove that the ox represented fire, the lion light, and the eagle spirit or air, there could be no doubt, he says, that this would have been a proper representation of the trinity in the heavens; and, by consequence, of the invisible Trinity by them represented.

But, as the face of a man was added, joined, as the Prophet takes notice, to the face of the lion, the representative of light, the Second Person, our Author insists, that this appearance exhibited to man, for his comfort, just when for his sin he was expelled paradise, and sentenced to hard labour, represented the Trinity, with the Man Christ Jesus joined to the Second Person; and was the most compleat emblematical representation of what our Author supposes God revealed to *Adam*, when he told him, that *the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent*.

Again, this representation in the cherubim was a thing so well known and understood by the ancients, though we have no description of it but in *Ezekiel's* vision, that, when the Lord commanded it to be made for the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, the workmen made it at once, without wanting a pattern. And our Author lays no small weight on it, that figures of these cherubim (and he says he can shew why there were two of them) were, besides the ark of the testimony, and the mercy-seat, the only furniture of the most holy place; into which none but the representative of the great intercessor durst ever enter; and that but once a-year, clothed with the emblems of his office, and being sanctified by blood.

As our Author is indefatigably industrious in his search
after

after the true meaning of emblems, institutions and services; he is no less so, in settling the meaning of words, hitherto mistaken or unknown. I shall give you but one instance.

The word *berith*, which we always translate *covenant*, *foedus*, occurs in several texts; and is generally coupled with such words as cannot suffer a man to believe that *covenant*, *foedus*, is its original signification.

The blood of the covenant, *The messenger of the covenant*, *I have given thee for a covenant to the nations*, &c. are expressions that will hardly go down; and what we translate *making a covenant*, *karat berith*, most certainly signifies *to kill*, or *cut off*, *berith*; which shews to conviction that *berith* must, at least originally, have had another sense than is now in the translation given it.

Our Author, searching to be satisfied in this difficulty, finds two texts, where the very same letters that compose *berith*, but differently pointed by the Jews, is truly translated *soap* [*borith* as they point it] *fullonum*; and this word, again, confessedly derived from *barar*, which signifies *to cleanse*, *to purify*.

If then, says our Author, *berith* is taken from the idea of purifying, it must, and may, from the genius of the language, carry the sense of purifier, purification throughout.

And if it is so understood, then all the texts in which it occurs, will be intelligible, and determined to that important sense in which they were written.

I have given thee for a purifier to the nations, *The blood of the purifier*, *The messenger of the purifier*, will all directly refer to the great sacrifice, the purification, to which our divines, without observing the rules of construction, and by very hardy figures, apply them.

And *karat berith* will signify, in its proper and primary sense, to cut off a, or the purifier, and not to cut off a covenant.

Our Author affirms, that in the usage of the Hebrew tongue, nothing is more certain or frequent, than that the type or emblem gets and bears the name of the thing typified and represented, or principally meant: where-

wherefore, if Christ was the purifier, the *berith* promised, every creature, whose blood was shed, as representing him, in sacrifice, might have had the name of *berith*; and, when such a creature was killed or cut off, as an emblem, it was true that *berith* was cut off or killed.

And as man, entering into covenant, that is, accepting of terms offered by God for his purification, in token of his acceptance, was to kill, and shed the blood of a type of the great purifier; which blood, though but of a lamb, the type, was deemed holy, and capable of sanctifying and purifying the altar, the tabernacle, the priest, and every thing that it touched; the same symbolical act was repeated for confirming pactions, covenants, or agreements, between men; a typical *berith* was cut off; and over sacrifice men confirmed covenants, and accepted of the terms proposed by each other, as they testified their engagements to God, and their faith that he was bound to them, by the same typical representation.

Nor will this construction appear strange to those who reflect, that in the *Latin* tongue, *percutere*, *icere*, and *ferire* *scædus*, are the terms used for making a covenant or alliance: in respect to which, the Etymologists satisfy themselves with saying, that slaying some animal in sacrifice, being a solemnity that attended all alliances; at the making whereof, the parties were willing to intimate, by the death of the victim, the punishment they thus consented to be bound to, if they violated the agreement; the words *ferire scædus* were brought to be expressive of the end or purpose for which such animals were slain at treaties and alliances; and they suppose that *scædus* may have been the ancient *Tuscan* word for *hædus*, a *kid*.

But, if they will depart from suppositions without any proof, and mount a little higher in their antiquity; if they will admit, what our Author thinks he has proved, that all the religious services of the Heathens were taken from the institutions and appointments in the service of the living God; though, by length of time, change of language, and imaginations; when men, having lost true knowledge, began to imagine, they were misapplied,
and,

and, in part, altered : they will find reason to believe, that, even amongst the Heathens, sacrifice, as the highest and most important act of their religious worship, was adhibited to covenants, as an appeal to their deities; and putting all they expected, from that symbol of their religion, on the issue of their faithful performance of their engagements.

In the *Hebrew* language, the same word, *asbem*, signifies *sin*, and a *sin-offering*, a kid, lamb, or any other thing offered for sin; and the Heathens made it a name or attribute of one of their *Elohim*.

It does not appear, so far as I know, that *scædus*, in the ancient *Tuscan*, was written for *hardus*; but it does appear, that the *Latin* has an adjective of the same letters, *scædus*, *a*, *-um*, which signifies *vile*, *unclean*, *abominable*, and *polluted*. Now, if with them, at the first formation of their language, an offering for sin or pollution could be called sin or pollution, as in *Hebrew* a kid or lamb offered for *asbem* is called *asbem*; I see no reason to doubt, that every offering for sin or pollution might be called *scædus*, or *scædum*, in the sense of that word adjective; and that therefore *ferire scædus*, in its proper and primitive sense, was, *to kill*, or *sacrifice*, a *sin-offering*.

But be this as it will, our Author discovers several temples, amongst the Heathens, to *berith* and to *Baal-berith*, by which he says is meant the Lord the purifier, the early Heathens having by no means lost the idea, or the expectation of a purification.

And he says that salt, a necessary ingredient in all sacrifice, was adhibited and required in this view only, as an emblem of purification; salt being one of the most powerful purifiers known, and of approved use in purging and purifying most sorts of metals from their earth, and base dross that closely adheres to them.

When Freethinkers object to the evidence drawn from prophecies and prophetic institutions, for supporting the Christian Religion, That it is ambiguous and uncertain; the prophecies being dark and obscure, capable often of a double meaning; and the institutions being figurative and typical, applicable only, *ex post facto*, by a comparison

parison of the figures with the events; and therefore not fit to communicate, with any certainty, to those to whom the Revelation was made, the knowledge of the event, which they were to expect, and in which they were to believe: the common answer is, That we are not, from our narrow views, and with our dim lights, to examine and to find fault with the disposition of the infinitely wise Being, purely because we cannot assign reasons, that to us seem adequate, for the conduct he has been pleased to hold; that it has pleased God to convey such intimations of the then future advent of the Messiah to the *Israelites*, in the Law, and by the Prophets, as were, when the event prefigured happened, full and distinct proof that Jesus was the person intended; and the system of Religion, delivered by him, the future law and faith to which all mankind was to be subject; and that, these things being admitted, it is presumptuous to inquire why the Deity, in infinite wisdom, thought fit to convey this knowledge and these intimations in prophecies and institutions, which, at the beginning, and before the advent of our Saviour, were wrapt up designedly in mystery and figures. And some people even venture to guess at probable causes, for the delivering and keeping this knowledge in this manner, till after our Saviour's passion.

But, if our Author's scheme for interpreting the Scriptures is true, the whole objection falls at once to the ground; because these emblems and figures, as well as many expressions called figurative, though dark, obscure, and uncertain, to us, (who have lost the knowledge of the language, as well as of the emblems), yet were not so to them, to whom the Revelation was made; and who, by those emblems, and by that language, understood as clearly what was foretold to happen, at the distance of many centuries, and therefore as distinctly believed in it; as we, at the distance of so many ages after the event, upon the relation in a language we understand, know and believe that Jesus actually came, and fulfilled the will of God, and the predictions concerning him.

And, if this be so, it will be easily understood, why the faith of *Abraham*, and others who preceeded the days of our Saviour, is so highly commended by *St. Paul*.

If the *Israelites*, to whom the Law was delivered, understood the language, the institutions, the emblems, as our Author does, they certainly must have known that, in due time, God intended to send a Messiah to the world, under the suffering character that Jesus bore; and they must have believed it would be so, because of the marks of Divinity attending the Revelation, which they were eye-witnesses to. The language, in which we are told of that event after it happened, is no more precise and distinct than that formerly used, was to them; and, if we have not seen the miracles with our own eyes, we see those prophecies delivered to them, and have authentick records of the completion of them; which does no more than put us on a level with them, in point of evidence, or cause of belief.

They, indeed, at the publication of the Law could not tell (so far as we see) how many ages, or years, the event was distant; as we, who have come after it, can. But, when the advent became nearer, and when the impression of the first Revelation became fainter, in the days of *Daniel*, they were brought more upon a level with us, even in that respect; and were told, to a day, when they were to look for the completion of their hopes.

It is not to be denied, that this Revelation, however clear in itself, became obscure, before the coming of the Messiah. The means by which this was brought about, our Author has explained; and very noble ends may be assigned, for which it may have been permitted to be so, by the divine wisdom and goodness; without impeaching the certainty of the proof of the Christian Religion from prophecies and prophetick institutions; and without suffering the divine goodness to lie under the imputation that would attend the supposition, that the Revelation of God was not full and compleat to mankind, and did not instruct them sufficiently for their conduct, their faith, and their comfort.

I have selected these few hints from amidst an infinity of other very various observations and discoveries, which the Author has, without seeming very solicitous about what is called method or order, brought together; and I have
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ranged them in such order, as seemed to me the most proper to let you easily into the Author's sentiments, so far as I understand them.

If YOUR LORDSHIP will judge of them fairly, and after due examination, you must inquire after them in the original; where you will find many proofs and arguments that my measure of searching does not sufficiently come up to, employed for illustrating each particular, besides what I have cursorily stated in these pages.

I have lost my labour, if YOUR LORDSHIP does not think these matters highly worth looking into; and, from your learning and candor, I promise myself, that if you do, those who are in the same low rank of learning with me, will have great obligations to you for letting them know how they are to form their judgment upon matters that seem to concern them and mankind so much.

In the treatise last published, *Of Power essential and mechanical*, our Author, amongst other very curious and surprising things, undertakes to confute Sir I—N—'s principles of gravity, attraction, infinite vacuity, and projection, which, he says, are not only unmechanical, but contradictory to the nature and idea of material substance, and impossible and absurd. And he pretends to prove, by different editions of Sir I——'s works, and from different passages in them, that he has at different times varied and changed his own opinions; and, in effect, as our Author calls it, given up his own principles, which are untenable. In this last treatise, our Author mixes, with his reflections against Sir I—— and the late Dr. C—, a degree of bitterness and severity that must be disagreeable to many, and which nothing can excuse, but a zeal for the honour of Religion, which in him seems to be very strong and sincere.

I am,

My LORD,

Your LORDSHIP's

Most Obedient,

Humble Servant,

Advertisement.

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